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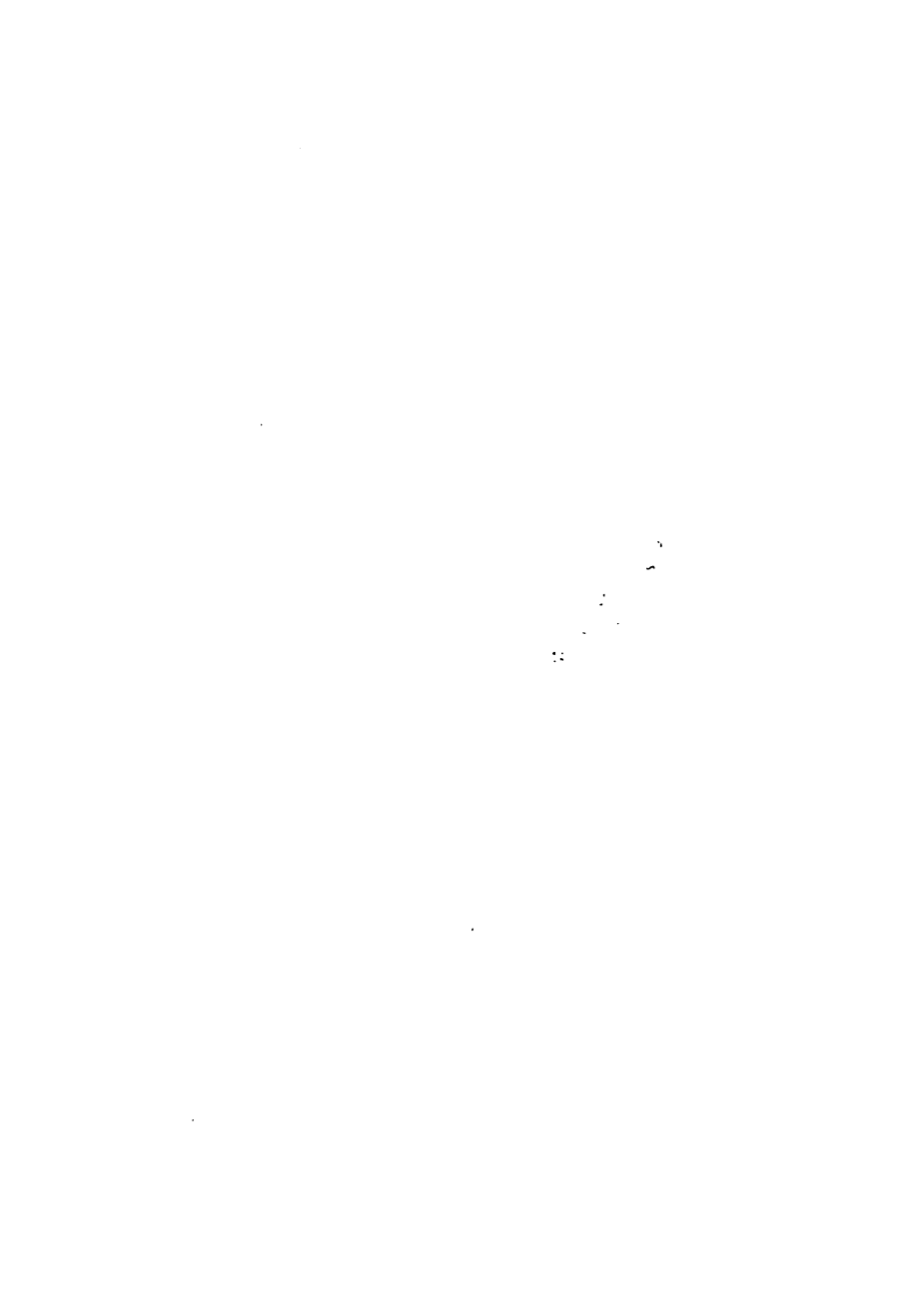
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CARRÉLLA.

LYRICS, LAYS, AND SYMPATHIES.

LONDON:
UNWIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS,
BUCKLESBURY,

“CARRELLA:”

A Fable Tale in Verse.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

ALICE MOORE, A CHRISTMAS STORY.

AND OTHER POEMS,

MANY OF WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN THE PERIODICALS OF THE DAY.

BY

J. J. BRITTON.



POPULAR EDITION—PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London:

PROVOST & CO., SUCCESSORS TO A. W. BENNETT,
5, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT, E.C.

1870.

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DEDICATION.

TO HER WHO IS THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE,
TO HER WHO HAS BEEN,
IN THE ROUGH HIGH WAYS OF THE WORLD, AND THE
FLOWERY PATHS OF LITERATURE,
MY DEAREST FRIEND, GUIDE, COMPANION—
TO MY BELOVED WIFE,
I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME.

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CARRELLA.

CARRELLA.

A Room in London.

CARRELLA AND FRANCIS.

"Mr Francis, why so dull to-day? so dull, indeed,
That scarce three little words have pass'd betwixt
Your lips and mine; for though I talk sometimes—
You say that I talk well—I cannot talk
To one who sits as moody-motionless
As Reynolds' portrait of the Banished Lord,
Or Grant's great pictures on the Academy walls.
Time was you loved me, and love gave you speech:
Come, I will sit beside you, and just try
If I have power to scare this demon gloom.
I can recall a time when you were full of words
As roses of perfume, and words as sweet
To the deep inner breathing of the heart
As great musk roses on a night in June

Are to the outer sense. But you forget ;
Nay, throw the *Times* away, sir ;—there, my words
Were once too precious to be mixed with cant
Of music halls turned pious for the nonce,
And rant upon the hustings, stocks, and funds,
And vulgar loves and crimes. Now listen, sir ;
I can recall a time when I was singing low
A song you loved, and told me was your own ;
And you hung over me, and o'er my harp,
In that dusk room at evening, in the house—
My father's—when the mellow western wind,
As you said in your pretty speeches then,
Blew towards us kisses from the flowers,
And your lips trembled on to mine ; and so,
As if contagion from the flowery kiss
Had caught us both, my lips went trembling too,
And kissed you close, ay, closer than they should,
But all my heart was fluttering, and I felt
Your own beat fast, your cheeks burn, mine burnt to
I smote the last chord, and my harp was still,
But its sweet tones seemed mingling with the kiss.
I felt I lived for the first time ; I felt
The thrill that sweeps a woman's blood when she
Her love's ideal incarnate sees, and greets

Her heart's desire, the one she must possess,
Or, losing him, her life and she henceforth
Are arid things, as sapless as a gourd,
Or date-stones bleaching in a tropic sun ;
And you were touched the same—at least I trust.
Ah! well, I felt your heart beat ; take them here,
Here, the same arms about you, let me hide
My face, for even now the memory
Of that dusk evening makes me flush again.
There, that is right ; your arm here, round my heart,
Just pressing like a fetter, without which
The ample round of earth were too confined.
Now let me call to mind that other night,
That luscious, soft, and rich midsummer night,
When all the air seemed breathing only love ;
The nightingales too much in love to sing,
Another of your speeches ; when the dusk
Was turning dark, my father gone to tend
Some village sick folk, and my sisters safe
In bed, my Francis, you and I alone
Walked forth, beneath the stars just glimmering out ;
Threaded the beechen avenue, and passed
That odorous jasmine arbour, set
Within a little ring of aspen trees,

Like a sweet love within a trembling heart ;
I feel the scent of those white jasmines now,
I feel the trembling of those aspens still.
'Twas there we plighted troth, my dearest ; ah !
That kiss was like those old ones—kiss again.
No longer sad and dull, but, Francis, mine,
Who took me from my home by loving stealth
That other eve, and held me until now.”
The speaker was a woman, nobly fair,
Large statured, grandly moulded, one from whom
A sculptor might have chiselled Juno's self,
And yet her large full eyes with tenderness,
Borrowed from Venus' own, were bright ;
Her hair dark, soft, a river rippling loose,
With mystic lights upon it here and there ;
Her arms and shoulders gleaming round and white
Through the thin muslin that revealed their shape,
An artist dream of woman-life she seemed.
The scene, a London room, whose windows looked
Upon the park where fashion's minions came,
Whirled, flitted, crossed, like fire-flies in the dark.
The one to whom she spoke, a weary man,
But grandly moulded too, a sort of wreck
Of what had once been noble, with the lines

Of thought and trouble crossing his great brow ;
Fair-haired, blue-eyed, large-limbed was he.
A luncheon, with its silver and its snowy cloth,
Shone on the table, and Moselle's best grape
Was sparkling yet in his unlifted glass.
He turned as she ceased speaking, kissed, and said,
" I would your harp were here, that I might list
But once again to that sweet song you sung,
Which drew our hearts together on that night."
" My harp, alas ! " she said, " was cruelly sold
When home was broken up." Her accents shook,
And something like a mist crept o'er her sight,
Though gone within a moment, when she smiled—
" But yet my voice is here, and I can try
To please you, whether you be pleased or no."
He looked admiringly, and she burst forth—

" Love in spring-tide, when the woods
All with love are ringing ;
Love in autumn, when the sheaves
Homeward wains are bringing.

" Love in summer's warmest flush,
Over hill and meadow ;
And in winter's dreariest time,
And its darkest shadow.

“ Love, thou bringest all we need,
Sun, no sun without thee ;
And the darkest shadows glow
In the rays about thee.”

“ Thanks, thanks,” he said, and guerdoned with a kiss
The round white hand that lay upon his neck,
Then drained his glass, and softly filled again.
She looked at him—“ But why,” she said, “ so dull,
So leaden-witted ?” “ Truth,” he answered her,
“ I’m sure I cannot say, and yet I know
A fate, or something like a fate, is hung
About my head to-day ; a tiny cloud
I fear will break in tempest torrents soon,
I know my life is one huge blunder.” “ What !
’Tis not regret !” she cried. “ No, no ; ’tis wrong,
The bitter wrong I do you gnaws my heart,
And wears away my life as rust wears steel.”
“ Wrong ! wrong ! why, Francis, sure you dream ;
What wrong ? do I not love—am I not loved ?
Loved with a man’s full, generous, throbbing heart ;
Wrong cannot live where such love dwells, my dear !”
“ Ah, yes, but look with the world’s eyes, not mine,
For just a moment—are you wife ?—the ring—
There on your finger, is it not a sham ?

Our union all unblest,—ourselves but scorned ;
And can you bear it, and this life of ours,
Wherein you live apart perforce—perforce—
From those who should be proud to greet you theirs ? ”
“ Bear it ! have I not borne—nay, loved to bear ?
What more ?—wife—wife—why wife ? did we not say,
You schooling me, whose tongue but followed yours,
We hated priests, and priest-made laws, and all
That mewed as in a coop the world’s free heart,
And cramped the soul of man, and other bonds
Than love and honour forged them for themselves.
Nay more, did we not argue, kissing soft between,
That when close vows were needed, love was not.
And I believed ; wife—wife—why wife ? you said,
Or said you not, when troth was asked and given,
That troth was all-sufficient, that we rose
Love-winged, like eagles, over the dull herd
Who tinkered up their troth with church-made oaths ;
Such things were not for us, for you and me,
Whose love was like a burning zone round both,
And rivetted to life, with life alone to cease.
These, these your words, and I believed in you,
Trusted in you against all preaching, you
Against the world, against myself, and now,

O Heaven ! do you regret...regret...regret ? ”
Loud sobs and gushing tears, that flowed so fast
Between her fingers, dropping on her breast,
These were the climax of her sudden storm.
“ O love ! ” he cried, and then again, “ O love ! ”
Enwrapping close her palpitating heart,
And covering thick with kisses both her hands,
Her forehead, and her hair, “ Believe me still,
Yours, only yours, for aye ; no wifedom you
Can need, no closer could we cling, my love.
All I have said before, I say it now—
Look up, look up—there, kiss me ! bright again
Your face as all your life. Now, for your song,
To pay it back in the same coin, though dull
I’ the ring to those gold coinage notes,
Suppose I sing one of those random screeds
I used to make when in the scribbling vein ;
Meanwhile, just turn your chair, and, as I sing,
With your best skill, I pray you, touch the notes,
Since harp we have not : ” laughing then he cried,
“ Our gentle neighbours, sure, will think us mad,
To sing and thrum at luncheon time, alone !
What matter ? spurn the custom of the world,
This rotten world, with fair peach-blooming rind—

This worthless world, in small things as in great.
Oh, ha ! begin, Carrélla"—and he sang —

" Carrélla, oh ! Carrélla,
Thou truest true-love mine,
The looks that play,
In thine eyes of grey,
Have kindled my heart like wine.

" Carrélla, oh ! Carrélla,
Thou dearest maiden of all,
Each long soft tress,
In its loveliness,
Has wound my heart in its thrall.

" Carrélla, oh ! Carrélla,
Thou dearest woman of earth,
The nameless grace
Of the soul in thy face
Has lent to my life new birth.

" Carrélla, oh ! Carrélla,
Cling closer, closer to me,
To thee and me
Our love shall be
Our life, and death, and eternity."

His song compelled a silence, for his voice
was rich and mellow in its depths, and clear
like a clarion-toned, in heights to which it soared ;

A noble voice, and one which, when he sang
His best from out his heart, as he did then,
Might well have earned the plaudits of the gloves
In well-bred opera circles critic-crammed.
But need was not to use his voice for gold,
And so for heart's relief alone he sang.
The house, the trunk that claimed him, say, had wealth
And titles for the elder stems, and power
That fell like sunshine on each little branch,
To far collaterals ; of the branches he,
A wayward roving twig, was ever at feud
With the great trunk that gave him place and ease.
At last, when silence born of song had tired,
The lady whom he called Carrélla rose
And went, she said, leaning so gracefully o'er,
To kiss him lightly, fair between the eyes—
“ To feed her love birds in the breakfast room.”
So he, alone, rose—yawned—and on the couch
Threw all his lazy length ; then quickly stole
Across his face the shadow as before—
“ Marry ! well, so Heaven knows I would, in spite
Of all those theories—if—ah, that ‘ if,’
That crooked finger mocking at the wills of men !”
He laughed in scorn, and shut his eyes, and hummed

A witty, wicked song, and almost dozed.
Meanwhile the rumbling of the chariot wheels,
Light rolling with their beauty-freight, went on
Before the house, and flaky foam was tossed
On satin horse chests from the silver bits ;
And so the " world " within the world enjoyed
The sunny afternoon in its old way.
At length a break in the continuous hum
Happened—a crack—a scream—and rising shrieks
And many mingling sounds, and Francis then
Upleaping, to the window ran, stood, gazed—
Something he saw, the seeing blanched his face
To vellum's hue—a lady lying there
Among the trampling horses' hoofs. Swift, swift,
Down the broad stairs he leapt, and out—amongst
The wild *mêlée*, as his ancestors oft
In old crusading days, for danger still
Had power to stir him, ever languid else,
As the war-trumpet stirs a warrior's steed.
And proud Carrélla with triumphant heart—
For she re-entered—saw her hero bear
With servant help a white and senseless load
Within the house, and flew to give her aid.
His labour done, and the white lady left

Upon a bed with doctors round, he, Francis, came
Into the room, and whiter than before.

“ Oh fate, fate, fate, or Heaven, which is't, which is't
That finds us out ? but she—to live or die ! . . .

O God, let me not *murder* in my thoughts . . .

O miserable me ! ” Then came Carrélla back,
And he in outward show was calm. “ Well done,”

She cried, “ just like my hero that ; but she—

That poor, poor lady—do you know, I fear,

I fear, if life remains, 'tis but a spark,

How sad, how very sad !—and think you, dear,

She has a husband ?—yes, I saw a ring—

But that—” she paused—“ sure we *must* find her
friends,

She must be dear to some heart, she is fair—

Hark ! did not some one call ? I go again.”

She went, and suddenly a groan, like that

Which leaves the heart of some oak bole when axe

Searches its inmost roots and it begins to bend,

Escaped his teeth so closely, as in spasm set.

Days glided o'er, and in the twilight room

She lay whom he had rescued, with the life,

In the fair form death-pallid, wavering 'twixt

The worlds of flesh and shadow.

On the sixth she spoke,
And reason's orb came heaving from the deep
Of night and silence, which when Carrélla heard
She flew to tell her hero, but he only grew
More haggard at the news, and drank, and sang,
And laughed, and swore, until she wept for him,
Sore marvelling at his mood.

One eventide,
When kind Carrélla by the sick bed watched,
Some words were passed, some questions and replies
Twixt her and the sick lady, till she bit
Her lip, and the blood spouted, her eyes filled,
Her brow flushed hotly, yet she calmly passed
From out the sick room—even with a smile—
But straightway dashed before her lover's face,
A wrath incarnate, all her Juno form
Dilating, swelling, with its throbbing rage :
Yet hot tears burst the while, and dropt, like lead
Molten from out her heart—" O Heaven !"
She cried, " say is it—is it true, for yet
I dare not, must not, will not, think it true !
Your love, your life, is all a lie—a lie,
Or does she lie, that woman—lady there ?
Is she—O Heaven !—your wife—your harlot, I ?

"Oh! hear," he faltered. "Is it true?" she cried—
"Speak, or you kill me—" And he said, "'Tis true—
Oh stay—one moment yet—Carrélla, stay!"
In vain, for she was gone.

Too broken to attempt
To stay her or to follow, he sank down
Upon the couch and covered all his face.
The servants shunned him, for they felt his woe
By instinct, and for hours he sat alone—
The night stole on, and she returned no more,
And quest was made, and none knew when she went,
But in her room were piles of rich attire,
And strewn about were chains, and gems, his gifts,
And on the table, snapt in two, her ring,
The plain gold ring she wore.

On seeing this .
The servants marvelled—well they might, but he
The master of the house, in silence sad,
Took heed of all, and understood the words
The message left to him in those dumb things.
Then to his wife he went—his wife!—his wife.
She lay there white, insensible, earth-cold,
And he, with fingers clutching at his heart,
Had yet once more to pray against a wish ;

And to the placid doctor and the nurse
For ease of heart he told his tale.

He told

How she, his wife, his bane, was made his wife
To please her father and his own, because
His blood was tinged patrician, and her sire,
Alive, as yet, when dead would leave a hoard
Of gold to her. “They married us by force;
I hated her, she me; yet, she was fair in face—
You see, e’en now is fair—though changed of
course,

And not ill bred; but had, small blame for that,
A lover ere our marriage, and she kept
Her love for him; enticed him to the house,
And dallied with him to my face. Great Heaven!
Can I remember, and not beat my brains
To pieces on yon wall—for honour’s death?
One night, that woman lying there, I say,
Dishonoured her own name and mine—then fled—
And swiftly hellwards gliding down, she lived
With him in open day; caroused, and drank,
And gambled, so they say, till her very sire
Spurned her, and all the world made jest
Of her and me. My pride, so broken down,


Tugged sorely at my heart-strings in its fall.
Stung by the scorn, the buzzing in my ears,
I fled away beyond the laugh of men,
And smirking dowagers, and giggling girls,
Who in the pauses of a pic-nic or a dance
Turn life's white sorrows to a merry jest,
And laugh at tragedies. From these I fled
To that far corner of our land where lie
Blue lakes and rugged mountains, wood and wild,
And English nature at her brightest, with a touch
Of grandeur borrowed from some sterner land.
Into the mountain shadows pure I fled,
And there abode, and there, there, there, I met
The one I loved—and could not tell my tale—
Not say I was—a wedded and dishonoured man.
How could I tell it?—had you seen her first,
As I did, in her father's house—her sire
A village priest, and she so beautiful,
So pure—heed not, I say, what followed, pure,
I speak it in the eye of Heaven—and seemed
When sitting by her father's knee, beneath
The mild light of his quiet, holy eyes,
All-awing virtue, at the feet of faith.
Had you so seen, and loved as I, who yearned

With a heart hungry after love, the first,
You could not, any more than I, have pulled
The fair white temple down upon yourself,
And buried hope in ruins. Say 'twas weak,
Mad, wicked, devilish, what you will ;
I care not, never can again—say, think, your worst ;
Dishonour brought dishonour ; well, 'twas just ;
Suppose I say 'twas just ; and yet I know
I love her as my life—yea, more tenfold
Than fifty lives ! yet still I did her wrong,
Poor soul—poor soul—poor soul—
Most bitter wrong !

Your patient stirs ;

I go, I cannot speak to her ; yet, should she ask,
Tell her I can forgive her—and I do—
Yes, tell her that ;" so saying, stalked away
Within his woe, as in a mantle wrapt,
His wife woke, swooned again, and died that night.
Strange, sad, when death-news brings a throb of joy !
No vain pretence of mourning her was made,
But, when her white form had been laid in earth,
He, light of heart, betook him to his task
To ransack England's corners through, till he
Had found again his vanished light of life—

He bribed, and feed, proclaimed, and advertised ;
Sowed money broadcast ; often flying went,
Upon the merest hint, north, south, and west ;
From rocky sea coast to the coast its opposite ;
From chalk to granite, and so back to chalk again.
But all availed not ; and the autumn came
Once more on earth, with his brown vintage looks,
And dark Italian eyes grape-lustrous ;
And then another hint unwearied sent him off
To a far village on the Cornish coast ;
And this time right—a cottage by the shore,
A rough shore sown with boulders vast, and high
sand drift,
She had, and paced the sands at evening ; thus
He watched her from afar, and his outreaching heart
It seemed would beat its bars away, and fly
Towards her ; but he curbed its willingness,
Well knowing all her ways, and that to go
Before her in hot haste would meet but scorn
From those full perfect eyes, whose love was deep
As if from eastern skies they drew their light,
But which in scorn, in hate, were eastern too :
So he retired, and penned a letter brimming o'er
With all old love and tendernesses sweet,



Wherein he told his sad life story's all—
Told her that he was free, at last, to wed
The one from whom his heart had never strayed,
Howe'er his tongue deceived her—sealed and sent
The letter—and the next day it returned—
Returned unopened—scorn of scorns was there !
He felt in that the glance of those dark eyes—
Scorn-light from meeting which he shrank ;
He writhed, and all his old patrician blood
Burnt in his forehead, throbbed about his neck,
Till, ever hungry love the victor rose,
Forbade more than a passing anger-twinge,
And he bethought him of a faithful friend,
Leal-hearted, loving, tried, and true.
To him he went, and, by the cherished love
Of their old college days and schoolboy times,
Implored him piteously to yield him help.
As soon as asked 'twas granted, and his friend
Departed in the morning twilight, and at grey
Of evening stepped upon the rocky coast,
The boulder casket holding such a gem.
Two days slid by, and he returned.

“ Is't done ? ”

He shook his head—“ No, no, I found her proud—

But what a noble woman ! Oh, my friend,
What were our Greeks to her ! Ah, why,
With a great heart like yours—for it is great—
Could you have wronged so true a heart ?

Forgive !

For I forbear—I found her proud, too cold
At first to speak of you. I told your tale,
That misery of your marriage, and the woe
That long, an ulcer, fed upon your life ;
And as I told, I watched her ; thought she grew,
By slow gradations, softer ; love I saw
Swim in her eyes—those lucid eyes—oh, sure,
I never saw such eyes in life before,
Have dreamt of such, have seen, but seldom, so
Great woman souls look out through painted eyes
In noble pictures painted long ago ;
I looked into those eyes, and softly said
That you were free, and wished to give her all
You had so long withheld ; then, then her voice
A little faltered, and she answering said—
‘ Ah, would such freedom had been long ago,
Before my life was wrecked ! ’ Then flaming out
In pride and wrath—‘ But oh, the lie !
The sugared falsehood of his life,’ she cried,

‘ The wicked, cursed lie he lived—how, how,
Can I do else than hate him, think you, now ?’
Oh, no, I said, not hate him.

‘ Well, not *hate*,
‘ That were impossible ’—and here she wept—
‘ Not hate, but tell him all our past is gone,
Is broken, as yon wave that broke just now ;
Reform that wave, and then rebuild our life.’
Yet see, I cried, the wave reforms itself—
The element the same—a nobler wave.
‘ Peace, peace,’ she said, ‘ trouble no more, no
more,
Go tell him life is broken,—not love gone—
Be sure you tell him that—and say we two
Under the stars—must meet again no more.’
Pale as a ghost she left me, and the breeze,
The chill sea breeze, swept o’er my cheek, and felt
Like breath of a cold seer destroying hope,
Or the corpse-fingers of a chill despair—
And so I fear it was indeed.

Why, friend !

Old friend, dear friend, cheer up ! there may be
hope !

Whilst life is hope is, Francis !—nay,

Art ill ? ”

“ When hope diè's life dies,” said his friend, in tones
Scarce louder than a whisper, and from thence,
As if a blight had breathed upon him, grew
Weaker and sadder, grew so old and wan
In face that his companion, had they met
By chance, had passed him by.

At length he lay
Prone on his bed, his great limbs growing weak
As a half-weaned child—a very wreck !
And then his faithful friend once more went forth,
Steam-hurried, to the Cornish coast, and sought
Carrélla once again, and, audience denied,
Broke out—“ Nay, you *must* hear me, for I come
From Francis' sick room, and his life is here.
I come to seek that life ;” then piteously cried,
“ O lady, he is dying for your sake ! ”
“ Dying—oh say not dying, he for me ;
Where, where ? stay, see, I come this instant, now—
Oh sir, let us be quick—dying, saidst thou ?—
Forbid it—and away from me . . . oh, sir !
Why do we stay ? . . . 'tis a day's journey hence : ”
And here she fainted, and her haste delayed them.
At length the two sad hearts were fleetly borne

To where the great dome held the gilded cross
Before their sight, priest-like, emphatical,
And whispered—was it—"be resigned," or "hope?"
We know how many days of life there are,
Soft days, with flowing chaplets and light feet;
Such days pass gently by, and leave small trace
Upon our memories; other days there are,
Which trample on our hearts with hob-nailed
shoon,

And even these, perchance, we may forget:
Still others are there, days which set
Their chilling footprints on our life for aye.
And such the friend who bore Carrélla back
Declared, in after time, that day to be,
When he and she were borne through flying fields,
Through darkness and through light, with clattering
speed,
High over viaducts, and deep through tunnelled
gloom

Together; she, a carven image, set
Against the cushions, very white and still—
Speechless and tearless—with her full eyes fixed
On something far away, or deep within,
With thoughts and memories interclasped.

And so

The strangers, men and women, who came in
And went with them awhile and passed away,
Found her, and finding, marvelled and admired;
For through her sorrow's statuesque reserve
Her beauty beamed more wondrous evermore.
At last the journey's goal was reached, the whirl
And hubbub of the beating city's heart,
Where the full arteries send their gold for blood,
Closed all about them, which they pierced in haste,
And made their way towards where her home ha
been.

But, on the threshold, even there she stopped
And laid her hand on her companion's arm
Faltering, then firmly, and in accents low—
“I find I err,” she said, “my heart e'en now
Will ever lead me wrong—I cannot enter here!”
“Not enter here? have we not travelled far,
So far, to see and save him—if we may?”
“Oh spare me, for I cannot enter here—
Not enter this house evermore—until
As wife I enter—or until I cross
This threshold with a priest to make me wife;
’Tis so—I dare not sin in this—and yet—

And yet—I long—O Heaven, my heart
Will tear my will in pieces if I stay !
Go to him whilst I wait—and tell my wish,
But come back quickly with a word for me
Of how he is—and looks, and what hope is,
And—what is done let it be done in haste.
For I *must* see him—yet I will not see
Him, even him, save as his wife—in truth.”
With a great thrill of admiration, he
To whom she spoke, gazed in her noble face,
And pressed her hand, and went to do her best.
She, left alone, felt rapid wheels of time
That spun around her, mingling with the roll
Of earthly wheels, yet all distinguished well ;
Saw old Love lean from out the flying car,
Who pressed soft fingers on her brow, sweet words
In her ears whispered, felt the chain of flowers
Dropped o’er the wheel-spokes silently ;
Saw, from the foliage knots, the lithe snake slip ;
Felt horror as of old—then, with a mighty gasp,
Brought love to seek the dropped ends of the chain.
The leal old friend, admitted to the house,
Entered his friend’s sick chamber in such haste,
Full of his news, *that he forgot how weak*

The once strong Francis was, who listless lay ;
But seeing his dear friend, turned beaming eyes
Upon him as he came.

The tale was told,
And, at the words, " Carrélla—she is here,"
The sick man sat upright, as if a life,
Renewed from some great prophet's breath,
Had smitten all his veins, and flashed his eye
With new hope, other fires ; and with his ears
He drank the news of his Carrélla's wish,
As drinks a traveller of a runnel pure
When sandheats smite his brain, and all around
Great yellow sandhills lie, and over head
A tropic sun enchains him with its glare.
His words came fast, he clasped his hands—
" God bless her, bless her, quick—let it be done—
Be done as she has said—and bring her here,
That I may kiss her with pure lips but once
Before I die—for friend, old friend, dear friend—
Stay—water here—I faint—I faint."
And saying so, and gasping, he fell back
In a dead swoon ; and, crying out, his friend
Himself smote on the breast and cried,
" Oh, madness ! I have killed him with the news !

And the nurse shook her head and summoned help ;
They feared him dead, and death-like he appeared,
But after space low breathed.

Then Hubert went

To where Carrélla waited ; told her not
Of that great swoon, but told her of the rest—
The blessing, and the sudden fire, and the command ;
And she in silence pressed her fingers white
Upon her eyes, closed lips, and sobbed a prayer.

* * * *

Another morn, and in its early prime
The priest was brought. Then sweet Carrélla stepped
Once more across the threshold, stirred at heart
With joy wherein a hundred sorrows shared,
Or seemed to share.

The nuptial chamber lay

Flooded with primrose-yellow light, and bloomed
As if itself were a sweet flower bloom, fit
For some colossal heavenly wreath.
The sick man, propped with many pillows, sat,
But needed not their help when entered in
The light, the only light of life for him.
A hush, a silent group, a closer pair,
Hands joined, eyes brightening with the tears ;

Low faltering voices breathing words of truth :
The mild-eyed priest, with just a little break,
For sympathy, in his low gentle tones,
Blessing the two who made atonement there
For all the past, the spousal ring in truth
Left by the sick man on his bride's white hand—
And then another hush, in which there seemed to be
A holier benediction yet, a pair of hands
Invisible that joined the beauteous twain,
Too solemn-happy to have place for smiles :
And, last, the close embrace when all was o'er,
And Francis on her blossoming lips impressed
A clinging kiss of wedded love—the first.
Such the strange scene the friend who served him saw,
And such can never length of days, he says,
From his heart's memory obliterate.

* * * *

Did Francis live ? He seemed one night
About to quit his hold of life at once,
And called his wife, and said, “ I die. I hoped,
Thou knowest—to live ; for life is dear, most dear,
Carrélla being mine in truth : but all is best,
Oh ! think it best ”—for tears were running o'er
From those loved eyes—“ though hard to deem it so.

Perchance no earthly restitution serves,
Perchance 'tis best that old absorbing Death
Come with his priestly hands and part us twain,
Now in the very flush of joy ; my dear,
My own Carrélla, truest wife, beseech the God
Who has forgiven and blest—thou knowest
How He has blest—to give us strength to say,
Thou here, and I afar, beholding thee,
All, all is right, is good, is just and best.
May, check thy tears, mine own, it may not be,
And yet at times I fancy I am called—
'I'll try to sleep, but hold thou still my hand.'
But when the dawn-light came, Francis, refreshed,
Was filled with hope of life, and brighter eyed ;
And so, as days stole by, waxed strong by slow degrees,
And, ere a month was out, upon that shore
In Cornwall, where Carrélla walked alone
A little while ago, the two, with arms
Intwined, paced slowly by the marge
Of the grand western ocean, and the waves
Battling among the boulders and the juts of rock,
Seemed solemn organs pouring anthems forth,
Erenewed with bliss fulfilled, and thanks, and praise ;
And, as they paused awhile, and listened, rapt,

To the great ocean-anthems, very glad
And tranquil-happy ; suddenly he sang—

“The truth we learn from all the past,
So truly happy, it must last ;
This bliss, my wife, will live with life.
Long tossed amidst the billowy strife,
At last we touch the strand, sweet wife ;
See bending palms and vistaëd bloom,
Taste odorous gusts of soft perfume,
Not even transient hints of gloom.
Thank God we taste the bliss of life,
Thank God we land at last, sweet wife,
At last, at last we land, my wife.”

Then kissed they fondly, and she softly said,
“ The stars are glimmering out, 'tis waxing late,
Too late for you.”

“ Then let us turn, my love,”
He answered ; and towards their sea-side home,
Happy, ay, very happy, slow they passed.

LYRICS OF THE YEAR.



THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

'Tis a night of wail, and a night of woe,
And a night of doom and death ;
Strange shapes in heaven fly to and fro,
And a horror spreads over earth below,
For the fiends are busy beneath :
And the wind from the north, and the wind from the
 east,
Meet and mingle, and round and round
Go hand in hand with a moaning sound ;
And the white moon, high in the stormy sky,
Peers out with affrighted face
Through the broken clouds as they hurry by,
Shaking their manes in their headlong race,
Tossing their plumes as they reel and dance
Here and there in the dim expanse—
For to-night is the last of the olden year :

And ages and cycles long bygone,
They are circling around and hovering near ;
They have woven his robe and twined his crown,
And are waiting about to carry him down.

He has barred the door and the windows close,
He has heaped fresh logs on the fire ;
And a brimming cup on the blaze he throws,
Till the flames flash higher and higher.
So the Old Year sits with his friends together,
And they scoff in their hearts at the surly weather.

“Ha, ha !” laughs the year, “they have pattered a tale,
And they tell me I die to-night ;
But my limbs are lithesome and sturdy and hale,
And my spirits were never so light:
So we’ll drink till our noses are red as the dawning,
And we’ll see who hath falsely foretold in the morning.”

And “Ha, ha !” his friends in a chorus shout,
And the tankards clatter and clink ;
And the flames flash up to the rafters stout
Till the rafters shrivel and shrink ;

While the forests about in the tempest are shaking,
And the Night shrinks aghast from the Day that is
breaking.

So they feast and shout, while the winds without
Cease never their wail and warning ;
And with stealthy steps go the silent hours,
Till afar in the East in his cloudy towers
Upriseth the misty morning.
Then hush ! for the winds have stopped at the gate.
And the flames die down on the floor,
And the Old Year boweth his white head low,
Like a crested wave on the shore.

He is dead, he is dead, and his requiem swells
As in turret and tower a thousand bells
Ring and swing with a clangorous din,
And the wild winds carry the New Year in.
And the stranger sits with his smiling face
Where his fathers sat before ;
And the fierce red flames with a crackle and hiss
Leap up from the logs once more.
And the friends who had tasted the Old Year's cup

Falling and falling from east unto west—
Faster and faster from east unto west.

* * * *

Now it is stayed, and earth is arrayed
In a white garment befitting a bride,
In a pure raiment beseeming a bride,
And the red sun glides from his cloudy nest
To gaze on her whom he loveth best,
And every white valley, and city and hill
Suddenly flushes with crimson pale—
A bridal blush through a bridal veil.

MARCH.

He stands like a warder stout and strong,
In the open gate of the year ;
He bloweth loud and he bloweth long
A blast on the horn in his hands ;
And it rolleth shrilly and clear
Through the amber caves low under the waves,
And it rolleth along the lands.

The sprites of the fruits, and flowers, and leaves,
They had long been out at play
With the spirits that rule the mellow sheaves
In the crystalline palaces—
In the Ether halls no mortal sees—
In the gardens under the day :
But the stirring blast that clarion cast,
Oh, it broke their holiday !—

And they hurry home at their topmost speed,
Flurried and flushed with the sudden need,
Sprinkling earth as they pass along
With a flood of colour and gush of song—
For the Summer is coming to wed the Spring,
And earth on their altar her wealth shall fling,
And the Heaven's soft odours and breezes bring,
And the hollow heights and the depths shall ring
With a wild overgushing of gladdening—
With the tumult and joy of that marrying !

EASTER.

From her silent Lent awaking,
Lent of dark and gloomy days,
Stormy nights and lowering mornings,
See the earth her face upraise.

Richest raiment, many-hued,
Spring-enwoven now she throws,
Smiling, round her throbbing bosom,
And her face with gladness glows.

Primrose circlets crown her tresses,
Golden crocus-cups are there,
Hyacinths blue, and daffodillies,
Light the shadows of her hair.

So she springs from dust and ashes,
With a glad victorious smile,
And the merry March winds echo
Down the budding green defile.

And the skies are dropping softly,
Happy, sympathizing tears,
For their sister Earth uprisen,
From her Lent of storm and fears.

"Easter," all her birds are singing,
Easter, and the souls of men,
Lying long in strife and shadow,
Take the light of heaven again.

EPITHALAMIUM.

Comes happy Spring, like a maiden fair,
Quickly breathing the odorous air,
With grass-green robes, and round her hair
Apple and almond blooms, with care
Twisted and twined in a circlet rare ;
Over the wold where the sweet wind sighs,
Over the valleys with violet eyes,
Deep green dingle and flowery dell,
Heathery hollows and heights as well ;
And wherever she passes, morn or night,

All the broad earth smiles a smile of delight.
At last she comes where the Summer stands
Girt around with his fiery bands ;
Who steppeth forth as he sees her come,
And opens his arms for a welcome home ;
Then towards her, coming, he steps apace,
And folds her into his close embrace.
Then low winds whisper, Away, away,
Singing a rapturous nuptial lay ;
Bright streamlets glisten, and flash, and glow,
And there falls a soft rain-tear or so,
Green tremulous copses whisper low
As the murmuring breezes over them go ;
Then, hot, and fierce, and strong,
Jubilant rays come marching along,
And a dreamy silence follows the song.

SUMMER.

With a crimson flood of sunlight,
For his regal robe wrapt round,
Summer is sitting, throned and crowned ;

Earth, like a holiday city, drest
banners and fluttering pennons bright
conqueror's coming, hath donned her best,
launts in a flush of colour and light.
are the low silent valleys, and green
the woods and the breezy wold,
many a pleasaunce flaps in the air ;
reamers of amber and gold
the sides of the mountains grey,
heights in a sunny haze melting away ;
the brook in a glitt'ring wavelet breaks
the golden lily flutters and shakes,
over the rim of the granite walls
rainbow laughs, and flashes and falls.
the grand old sea breaks joyously
the cliffs on the golden sand,
the laughing waves, with their sunbright crowns,
sly roll on the laughing land.
rough the pillarless arch above ;
the living ocean's round ;
the old Earth, young for ever ;
for the Summer is throned and crowned !

DEATH.

SATED and weary the Summer is lying,
Dreamily living his youth again,
And the harvest sprites are flitting and flying,
Fanning his brows with the golden grain,
And the sea on its yellow sand is sighing,
And the drowsy wind in the valleys dying,
And the flowers fold up from the close dense air,
And a shadowy sleep sits everywhere.

List, oh list! there's a cry in the air,
And an eddying blast comes forth,
From the icy shores where the lone seas beat,
Far away in the starry north.

See, ah see! 'tis Autumn who rides
On the sweep of that eddying blast,
And the tree-tops shiver, and bend and break,
And the clouds come skurrying past.

And the ocean surges up with a roar,
And hither and thither the sand-drifts fly,
And a dull red light creeps over the earth,
And a grey haze over the sky.

And the Autumn clutches the forests green
In a hasty and eager clasp ;
But the leaves are true to the Summer they love,
And they wither and fade in his grasp.

Faster and faster the sand-drift flies,
Higher and higher the white waves rise,
And a shudder crawls thro' the darkening skies,
And the clouds knit close, like a leaden wall,
And thicker and thicker the red leaves fall,
Till Earth with the wreck of her pride is strown,
And conquering Autumn stands alone
As the Summer drops—dead—from his golden throne!

DIRGE.

SUMMER hath fallen
From his leafy throne ;
Broken his orb
And his sunlit zone.

One memory-draught
Drink we in the wine,
Trod from the grape,
And the nectarine.

Murmur a sigh
In the gathering breeze,
Whispering among
The yellowing trees.

Softly bewail
In the lone bird's strain,
Ere he spreads wings
For the east again.

Scatter a couch
Of the mellow leaves,
Or lay him to rest
On the fresh-bound sheaves.

Fruitage and flowers
Around him be strown;
Welcome, red Autumn,
To palace and throne!

•

LOVE-LYRICS AND BALLADS.

1

IOLINE.

By purple headlands wandering once,
And hills, whose names are glory,
And old historic ruins grey
With eld, and rich in story.

Full soon the spirit of the place,
Distilled from feudal times,
Had tranquillized my saddened soul,
And then I fell to rhymes.

A crag-like mass of ruin grey
Upon my right hand towered ;
Lock'd in old Ivy's fast embrace,
By verdure over-bowered.

The purple sun, through cleft and chink,
 Poured rays that seemed a blessing ;
The wild clematis clasped the stone
 With sisterly caressing.

And, as I stood, to memory came
 The legend of that ruin ;
Love, hope, and golden constancy,
 Pride, and the woes ensuing.

In days long past, when, some will say,
 The summer skies were bluer,
'The summer sun more golden-hued,
 And men and maids were truer,

Sweet Ioline, with sunny hair,
 Light step, and winsome graces,
And seventeen years, all writ in bloom,
 Lit these deserted places.

She found a playmate for her youth
 Among those castle bowers,
To lift her white feet o'er the brook,
 And crown her locks with flowers.

And Time, who touched as he flew by
Their forms with riper graces,
Made happier their companionship,
And warmer their embraces.

And so they went, with happiness,
And with each other roving ;
Till, on a summer's morn they woke,
And found they had been loving.

A simple land-less squire he was,
When his old father, dying,
Left him the heir to one lone tower,
In a heathery region lying.

No more they met as heretofore ;
No playmates now, but lovers,
In stolen moments, sweet as life,
And this her sire discovers.

And in a turret chamber shut,
A chamber lone and dreary,
Poor Ioline, with her sad thoughts
A *prisoned* bird, grew weary.

Nor had she of her lavished joy
One single raylet sparkling,
Save when on mellow moonlit eves,
Or just about the darkling,

The form she loved came gliding past,
And lifted eyes of yearning
To where amongst the starry lights
Her turret lamp was burning.

Or when, by trusty maiden hands,
Small missives to her given,
Were kissed, and 'neath her pillow set
To purchase dreams of heaven.

A great lord, ringed about with squires
Came, and with long endeavour,
Besought fair Ioline's ivory hand,
Who vowed to love him—never.

With slender fare, and stricter rules,
Then was she sore requited ;
Yet still the moonlight lit the glade,
And still her lamp was lighted.

One silent night down winding stairs
She crept, her wild heart beating,
And every creak and midnight sound
“ Danger ” and “ death ” repeating.

And through the postern's outlet small
She crept some faltering paces,
And fell, like bird that nestward flies,
In her true love's embraces.

On trusty steeds that spurned the dew
They rode the midnight thorow,
And trampled under foot and killed
Were solitude and sorrow.

And when the Morn look'd o'er the hills
Smiling and golden-tress'd,
Their hands were joined in faithfulness,
Their love a priest had bless'd.

Then backwards to the heathery land
They rode, and to the tower,
Where, decked by love's prevision sweet,
She finds her bridal bower.

Short bliss, short glimpse of golden rest,
Cruel and sad the awaking ;
When joy o'er-brimmed her swelling heart,
Then nearest 'twas to breaking.

Upon an Easter midnight fair,
When silver stars were beaming,
And Ioline, in true love's arms,
Of nought but love was dreaming,

Came there her father with a mob,
Whose arms and armour clattered,
They circled round the lonely tower,
And down the portal battered.

They smote to earth the faithful few
Who kept the portal tower,
And hurried, dripping with their blood,
To Ioline's bridal bower.

They stabbed her bridegroom to the heart,
And bore her, shrieking, fainting,
From where his bubbling life-blood pure
The silken couch was painting.

Then homewards, where was never "home,"
She, death-like, corpse-like lying,
Was borne along in eager haste,
For sure they deemed her dying.

Death slowly comes to those lorn hearts
Who call on him despairing ;
But hastes where cups are shining bright,
And life is worth the wearing.

They shut poor Ioline with her griefs
High in the turret olden ;
But days and nights were all as one,
Nor ever moon was golden.

Life slowly flapped the leaden wings,
Lent by his kinsman "Sorrow ;"
Day set in dew of falling tears,
To rise in tears to-morrow.

Then came the time when buried love
Should rise in living blossom ;
And when a rosebud from the tomb
Should lie upon her bosom.

And Ioline in mother-pangs
Alone, her raiment tearing,
O'erthrew the lamp—and quick the
High in the night were flaring.

The castle in the sea of flame
Seemed reeling like a vessel ;
The rolling smoke and midnight clow
Like Titans 'gan to wrestle.

In vain to kill the Demon's rage
Vassal and serf endeavour ;
Mother and child, and grief, and love
Relinquish earth for ever.

UNDER THE LINDENS.

UNDERNEATH the shadow
Of the Linden trees, my love,
When the mellow twilight melted
Into starry night above.

Looking out from amber tresses,
Star-like, luminous, thine eyes,
Violet true, on me were shining,
There I read my destinies.

Kindly little breezes, stirring
Linden leaves above me,
Made a whisper, saying gently,
“Yes, my dear, I love thee.”

Not alone the Linden's whisper,
Meek, thine eyes down-casting,
Silver-sweet I heard thee murmur,
“Thine to everlasting.”

Oh, how many days have glided
To their pillows 'neath the sea,
Since thy lips, love, and the Linden
Such glad tidings gave to me.

In thy mother-arms our darling
Gazing upward, wondering, lies,
Has the amber locks, and surely,
Has the same true violet eyes !

TO C. E. S.

A THOUGHT.

THOU perchance art thinking now
As I think of thee,
And our thoughts in heaven above
Meet invisibly.

When my limbs and thine, my dear,
Sealed in slumber lie,
Thou and I in spirit meet
All unknowingly.

Sweet the thought, our lives, my love,
Parted ne'er may be ;
Though between thy heart and mine
Leagues of land and sea.

In those unknown hours, perchance,
Each freed spirit feels
Shadowed truths, whose fullest form
Death alone reveals.

Thou in higher things mayst be
Still my gentle guide ;
Truth, and faith, and purity,
Chain me to thy side.

On our souls a little ray
Faintly, feebly, falls,
Of that light which shall be ours,
When the Master calls !

Oh that memory lived and flowed
From those hours to these !
Might we taste their hidden joys,
Hear their harmonies !

Ah ! it may not be, alas !
Not a glint or gleam
Steals upon our waking hours
Still 'tis sweet to dream

Of this two-fold life and love,
Two-fold running fate ;
Sad and lone we may be oft,
Never desolate.

Dream as I dream, sweet, that we
Can be parted never,
Though our hearts and hands, my love,
Half the world may sever.

THE DAWN OF DAY.

I stood alone in a mountain land ;
And the heights so grim and grey,
Like a banded host of Titans old,
Each with his crest of glimmering gold,
Barred the march of the dawning day.
But the day stepped on, and its trail of light
Over the pinnacled summits swept,
Down the long slopes and the gorges down,
Into the dens where the darkness slept ;
And loathly things, of that darkness born,
Shrieked and shouted and hurried away,
And I looked above me, above and around,
And the mountain summits stood far in the day !

Then I thought of her whom I loved and wronged
And who even then, as I knew,
Was nursing a love that was wed with despair
In her heart so loyal and true.

Yes, I thought of her whom I wronged, yet loved
With a love that hath no peer !
And a voice crept down on the morning breeze
And fluttered about mine ear :—
“ She is true, she is true, she is true and pure ;
Speed the false, foul thoughts away !
See her vigilant love and her silent grief,
Till she fades as fadeth an autumn leaf ! ”—
Flashed a light on my darkened soul ; and I saw
Within and about me, the dawn of the day !

And I sped—sped fast with a spurring heart,
Till the mountains like clouds to the rearward lay—
Through a rich meadow-realm—through flowers and
grain—
Ay, faster and faster, and never drew rein,
Through the morn—through the mid-day—through
evening still—
Through a starry midnight, and—into the day !

Then, ere the shadows of another eve
Followed the footprints of the flying noon,
Close clasped we stood in circling arms,
And heart on heart beat time and tune !

TO C. E. B.

O GENTLE heart that I have won !
Till now, through all the shifting years
Gone by, light-crowned, or dim with tears,
I knew not earthly life's pure bliss,
Till thou, true heart, didst bring me this—
Brought with thyself a bloom of love,
Where, wrapped in folded leaves, did lie
Sweet calm, sweet peace, as when we see
A summer heaven—a summer sea.

A ship long driving 'mid the driving hail,
Wave-torn, with broken spars, rent sail,
One flickering poop-light breasting the dark gale
Slid in a happy creek, where lilies broad
Slept on the waves, where mosque and palm
Bathed their high heads in sunny calm,
Where rippled music as the prow crept on—
So I, my wife, when thee I won !

O gentle heart that I have won,
Kind wife ! methinks with thee beside,
Life's withered paths grow green anew ;
Bright fruitage hangs where boughs were bare,
And from earth's circling compass fair
A hidden joy comes beating through.

O wife ! breathe of thy being into mine,
Breathe somewhat of thyself in me—
Strong faith, warm heart, pure mind,
And make me that I wish to be.

MARA.

ONCE they whispered my weak heart,
She was false whose calm grey eyes
Chained and tranced my listening life
With their love-wrought histories.

So I stole out warily
Under the still starlit sky,
Whilst each branch that creaked on high
Rent my heart with fresh alarms,
Soft I crept, and saw them stand,
My young wife in his bold arms ;
Back the blood rushed to my heart,
High in air I shook the steel,
Smote him once, and twice, and thrice,
Deep as arm can deal.
Loud his paramour—my wife—
Shrieked and prayed for his foul life,
Caught my wrist in frantic strife;

Wept and prayed—I dragged the knife
From his breast, and caught her hand,
Twined her fingers round the haft ;
Sore she cried—I laughed, I laughed,
“ Good,” he had not perished yet,
“ Good,” he still might pay the debt !
So I tasted vengeance due,
For I guided her hand well,
And I made her stab him through,
Stab him surely through and through,
Till her white arm got a hue
Of his heart’s adulterous flood ;
Then, to crown my vengeance rare,
Her white breast I laid it bare,
Through the beating beauty there,
Once, and twice, and thrice I smote,
Whilst my brain reeled round I smote ;
Then I joyed in vengeance great,
And I left her to her fate.
Lying on her borrowed mate—
Oh, but my heart was desolate !

Then I woke, ’twas but a dream,
But a foul and evil dream !

It was dawn, and my young bride,
She was nestling at my side,
While each tresses golden billow
Rolled o'er coverlid and pillow,
With her hands clasped on her breast,
Perfect Purity in rest !
And the sweet, fresh, morning air,
Like an angel presence there,
Filled the room, and filled my heart ;
And I saw the sunbeams dart
Through the boughs that interlace
Round the window's latticed space,
And I feared them as they streamed—
Angels' glistening wings they seemed.
Then, whilst I sad tears did weep,
Sure, I saw a glory creep—
On the morning stillness deep
Saw it—whilst my heart did leap—
Crown my young wife's happy sleep.


TO C. E. B.

THOSE golden years—how swiftly fled,
 Since thou and I, my wife, were wed—
 Have lightly touched thy beauteous head,
 Have softly touched thy happy face,
 Have only added grace to grace.
 Like dew-drops upon roses shed,
 Yet not without their share of toil,
 Their portion in the cark and moil
 Of this wild world, those years have sped :
 Troubles full many, and ignoble care,
 Right nobly borne by thee, were there ;
 And sickness with his weary eyes
 Abode with us ; last, to the door
 Of those who held our love in store,
 Came ancient Death—mysterious, chill,
 The silent servant of his Master's will.
 Through each, through all, my wife, we passed,
 And love through all has bound us fast ;
 So gazing on thine eyes, true wife, I see
 Thee fair as ever—dearer far to me.

TO MY DAUGHTER ETHEL ALI

(ONE YEAR OLD).

To bless thee on thy natal day—
A pride at once, and duty ;
Thine innocence, thy beauty,
Some lover's hand in after time
May hang like pearl-drops on his rhyme
What has my father-heart to say ?
A blessing from the full heart spoken ;
May He who blesses truly
Fulfil that blessing duly !
An idle wish that in thy day
No spectre care should cross thy way,
I will not wish thee bliss unbroken :
No, take thy share, my daughter dear,
Of that we all inherit ;
How should the human spirit
Be weaned from earth if no tears were ?
What room for faith where is no care,
How triumphs hope where lives not fear



I wish a better thing, I trust,
A faith to look through sorrow
To sorrow's crown, and borrow
The sparkles from thy tears, to shine
Where angel bands thy circlet twine,
And earth-born troubles sleep in dust.
Thou life thy mother gave ; may she,
As with each beauteous feature,
So with her loving nature,
Her truth, her faith, her sympathy
With groaning want and misery,
Her scorn of self, endower thee.
What more ? Yes, somewhat more I say,
One dear one, who had surely blessed,
And thee with folding arms caressed,
Had kissed thee oft with heart-warm kisses,
Had showered upon thee bounteous wishes,
Had she to us been spared to-day,
Passed heavenwards, she might not stay :
Though we with prayers would hold her,
And in our love enfold her,
It might not be, she might not stay ;
I bless thee, daughter, when I say,
Be like to her who passed away.

THE PAST.

WITH lucre heaped about my path,
Honour and envy dogging at my heels,
Last-living, eldest-born of a proud race
I lived, when first her tranquil face
Threw dust upon those baubles fate-bestowed,
Dimmed all the shining of my yellow gold,
Wrapped round my rank a threadbare fold,
Faded all pleasures in my hold,
Needing her love, her smile.

She loved me ! One May twilight gave
This secret to my heart.
Close-clinging, under hazel arches high
And the tall firs ; around and nigh
Pompeian urns with ivy crowns,
And smooth-limbed statues from their Grecian
High-showering fountains ; crystal domes
Where tropic beauty lived in tropic flowers ;

Stone porch with ancient coat and crest,
And English gables English ivy-drest—

There stood we as the mellow twilight slid
Away, and left the starry night :
There lingered we, when each to each
With tear-dimmed eyes and faltering speech
Gave the few words that seal a life—
“I love thee, dear !”—“ And I !”

So hung about my life the spell
That narrowed the dark Hellespont, and fell
Upon the Roman galleys in the Eastern sea.
Then did the flavour of my riches pall,
Then did the shadow on mine honour fall,
Envy no longer dear, her beauty all !

And steadily the tide of life moved on
With sunlight on its waves, when one
Tracherous, fair-seeming, honeyed friend
Spoke out the lie, false heart, false lips did lend,
“Thy gold she loves, not thee !”

* * * *

I put the half-world 'twixt my wrong and me—
Went sadly on through smiling lands,

Where purple daylight smote the sands
That girdle golden seas—went on
Through vineyard realms, by Rhine, Garonne
Through icy halls set in the Polar waves,
By bright mosque-cities, o'er the graves
Of mighty towns in ashes long ago—
Lonely from home—and homeward so.

* * * *

My riches crumbled like the bitter fruit
Whose core is dust. Care, with the plough
Of age, drove lines across my brow,
Scattered my hair with white.

So poor and lone,
And ill and bowing towards my rest,
I sat with weary palms together pressed,
One twilight, musing on that twilight gone
Far down the slope of time.

And see—

As if a gentle angel came to one
Thrown with the sea-weed on the shore, alone
Craving for death, yet living on ;
Just in the open door, among
The woodbine tendrils downward hung,
Her own loved figure standing. She—

Oh ! mercy—mercy—surely she
No dream, a sober verity,
Oh, bliss ! oh, torture ! none but she !

'Twas true ; and then the truth stood up
Within my heart, and smote me with myself.
I dared not speak or look, but she
Spoke with her heart's true melody ;
Spoke with a sweet oblivion of the past,
And ere the light died in the darkening west
My worn head lay upon her gentle breast.

LOVE FOR ALL TIME.

OPAL-TINTED, and golden, and brown,
Summer's dead treasures came sailing down
Rolling masses of cloud overhead
Passed to the rim of the evening red ;
From the lane to the woodland we took our
And round us was death, and round us death
Little we heeded Love that day,
Those forest treasures floating away ;
Little we cared for earth's sad frown,
As her leaves came slowly fluttering down ;
Nor for golden summer, dead on the lea,
As the breezes sang so piteously,
I was thy summer Love, thou wast mine,
Nothing to us were season or clime ;
We had love, and love for all time !
We stepped on the rustling leaves beneath,
Sure only a happy music they made ;
We pictured nought but a heaven above
In the rolling masses of shade.

Thou wast mine on that day
I was thine on that day ;
Earth surely is as we make it,
Gloomy or gay, gloomy or gay !
Nought we recked of mere earthly change,
Far above earth our thoughts could rage ;
What to us were season or clime,
We had love, and love for all time !

THE SKIRMISH.

I AM back from the fight, my love, my light,
Come back from the fight to thee ;
So clasp my neck, and give me a kiss,
And I'll pay thee back like this, and this,
And tell how we made, in the early morn,
Those crop-eared vagabonds flee.
The night was all black as an old black jack,
The morning was dim and chill,
I slept, and was dreaming of kissing thee, love,
And billing like ever a turtle dove.
“Tantarra !”—the trumpet scattered my dream
The rebels were climbing the hill.

“Ho ! to saddle, to horse, my men, my men !”
Each saddle was straightway manned :
“Hurrah ! hurrah ;” so we gave 'em a shout,
And fourscore swords came flashing out ;
And we swept upon 'em in front and flank,
Like a storm in an eastern land.

We shouted "King Charles," those snivelling carles
Were singing a rebelly hymn ;
They cut it short and stood to their guns—
Cut and thrust, cut and thrust, and nobody runs ;
Flash and smoke, till I saw not a man,
My eyes were all bloody and dim.

I was shot in the back, and a vagabond black
This cut on my forehead gave,
I let my sword have a right good sway,
And I sent the rascal to hell ere his day ;
Then a bullet came into my arm—never fear—
Faint not, little Lilly, I'm safe, I am here !

I set my teeth close, and my blood fairly rose,
When over the turmoil a voice 'gan ring,
"They're giving, they're giving, strike, strike for the
King !
For the King, for the King, for the King !
No quarter, strike home for the King !"

They rallied and stood, did all that they could—
The fellows were game, but their cause was bad ;
They wavered, they tottered, and weaker grew,
And my fellows charged on their heels like mad.

Ah ! small was the spoil for our blood and toil,
Not the worth of a groat did we find ;
My share was an old hymn-book and a chain,
A locket the owner will not see again,
Some trumpery Puritan wench's hair—
Here, follow thy dead lover's soul—to the wind !

Let me take from thy hair a curl to wear,
My girl, in this locket—just one ;
Thou shalt stand in the room of the Puritan wench
Stay, dear, sit here on this sunshiny bench ;
Art faint at sight of my blood, my girl ?
'Tis nothing, 'tis nothing, King Charles has won !

THE FALSE KNIGHT.

A MAIDEN paced beneath the leaves
Of the forest in the plain ;
Paced slow beneath the green-elm leaves,
Glistening with the sunny rain.
The whole spring skies about were smiling
Brightly through the April showers,
And the vernal earth about her
Smiling, with a smile of flowers.
The lady raised her happy face,
To herself she sang a song,
Sang an ancient lover's ditty
As she lightly moved along ;
She walked full lightly up and down,
Weaving many loving fancies,
Tinting a fore-pictured future
With the hues of old romances.
Suddenly, from hazel boughs,
At the entrance of the glade,
A manly voice in merry tone
To her warbling answer made ;

Then her knight came stepping forth,
Her dear warrior, loved so well,
Straightway took her to his heart,
And kissed her in that greenwood dell.
Sad the news her warrior brings,
Striking cold her heart as clay,
Eastern lands are swept with war,
And hosts are hurrying away ;
He with them must sail, to fight
'Gainst the Crescent for the Cross.
He stopped and kissed her falling tears—
“ Ah, no ! she will not feel his loss ! ”
The pattering rain, with myriad feet,
Smote the green leaves overhead,
And silent on that forest turf
Walked the twain with solemn tread.

* * *

One day, and in the autumn skies,
Cloud nor mist had cast a stain,
Underneath those arching elms,
That sweet lady walked again :
Ah ! sadly calm her lovely face,
Merry songs she sang not then,
She only walked with downcast eyes

Up the glade and back again—
Nourishing a hidden fear,
Cherishing a wavering hope,
And bringing oft a valiant love
With a chill distrust to cope.
As thus she walked, a little page
Lightly stepped before her sight,
Bore a pennon, battle-stained,
And a helm with plumage white :
Quick the lady raised her eyes,
Knew the casque her love had worn,
Knew the woven silk and gold,
Knew the pennon stained and torn.
She signed the cross and upward looked,
Upward at the sunny sky ;
One quick bound of her true heart,
From her lips one faltering cry—
Then amongst her sister flowers
Fell that lady white and cold,
On the turf her loosened locks
Like a stream of amber rolled.
Scarce a furlong from the glade
Is that lady's castled home,
Seeking for their absent darling,

Father, brothers, liege-men come
Morning dews are on her face,
Darkness in her violet eyes,
Secretly a glistening snake
Slides from off her as she lies.
Dead, in vain her father's tears
Sparkle on her wax-cold face ;
Vainly, too, her brother's arms
Fold her in his close embrace.
Yet no foeman's lance had smitten
Her false warrior, loved so well,
Where the glowing eastern waters
Round the purple headlands swell
In a tent with crescents crowned,
Flashing in the crimson light,
On an eastern pomp of cushions
There he lay—that recreant knight
And a dark-eyed eastern damsel
Chained him in a bondage sweet ;
Drunken with her flush of beauty,
All his world lay at her feet.

THE KING'S RESOLVE.

I WOULD think—I may not,
State treads meditation down ;
I would love—I dare not,
Love is fettered by my crown.
She, were earth my kingdom,
Far too poor a gift 'twould be !
Yet they say, “Thou art a king,
And she may not mate with thee !”
Ah ! they bring another,
Queen of many lands is she,
Yet a woman haggard, wan,
Only that mine eyes can see.
“Here,” they cry, “the consort
Whom thy people wills thee wed ;”
Conquered lands in constellation
Cluster round her royal head.

“ See,” they shout, “ the helpmate
Whom thy people wills thee have ;”
Ah ! my people !—say my masters,
I am but a crowned slave.
Hung about with gold and purple,
Ringed around with tinsel show,
I am but an empty pageant,
But a jester—call me so.
No ; I feel at length within me
All the man begin to move ;
Farewell state, and palace-prison,
Farewell pomp, and welcome love.

MATLOCK BATH.

YE waters, running brightly in the sun,
And waters gliding silently in shade,
Grey crags, like battered feudal towers,
With belts of shining ivy girt,
And woods rolled cloud-like overhead ;
Lawns, flowers, and gardens sloping down,
And villas lying in their cosy nest.
I feel the spirit of your happy calm,
Laid like a soft hand on my head,
And the dear influence of stillness winds
About my soul and sense, more soft
Than coils of velvet around weary limbs.
Sure, when dear Nature's arms are cast
Round us her children, and her voice,
Through listening ears, strikes on our hearts,
Oh ! Nature's Father, we are nearest Thee !

CREDO.

TOWARDS the source of daily light,
Towards the eastern window bright,
With the saints and martyrs story,
And their Master's life and glory,
Now we turn, our "Credo" singing ;
Solemnly the notes are ringing
Through the arches high above,
Notes that listening angels love.
Like our Master's holy smile,
Down the chancel, nave, and aisle,
Autumn sunbeams softly shine,
Vested in the colours fine,
From the window's tale divine,
Touching all the inner shrine
With a deep and crimson flood,
Symbol of the sprinkled blood,
Crowning cross and rerèdos
With a glowing, golden crown,
Symbol of the risen renown !

Grant, oh ! Master, pure and holy,
Whatsoever toils and dangers
It may be our lot to see,
Foes in kindred, foes in strangers,
Foes by land, or cruel sea,
Stormy hate and heresy,
Grant us this, divinest Master,
That, in joy or sorrow, we
Ever thus may turn to Thee.

NEMESIS.

A SIN from the down-trodden past
It stands and glares on me,
An iron hand my spirit shakes,
And, groping in my heart, awakes
A drugged and dozing memory.
I look from out my tent of years
Back down the vistaed way,
And see the footprints of my life,
The branches torn in idle strife ;
Strong briars down-bent, sweet blossoms r
And strown and trampled on the clay.
A love was mine in other days,
None else such love have known ;
A true heart beating quietly,
Fluttered and stirred when I drew nigh,
And when I came her ripe lips broke
In clustering smiles or ere I spoke.
I crushed that heart, that love I spurned,
All love I held in scorn ;

And, as it were, that self-same hour
A lust of wealth, of moneyed power,
A thousand things with golden stings
 Within my breast were born.
That wealth I gained, that power I won,
 My ships sailed far and near,
Their prows were bathed in Syrian light,
Their frozen sails stood cold and white
In icy bars, 'neath lustrous stars,
 In Arctic mornings clear.
I took a wife of high forebears,
 To prop my lacquered pride ;
She laughed me down with her high name,
Scattered my wealth, clad me with shame,
Fled over the sea with a lordling, and he
 Left her in her want, and she died—
Died in *her* arms whose love I scorned,
'Twas whispered in mine ears,
Died on her bosom tranquilly,
 Died penitent, and blessing me.
With sudden pang my sealed heart rang,
My love o'erflowed in tears ;
I hastened thither—ere I came
 Another tale they said,

And smote me down upon the dust,
With heart, and hope, and reason crushed

They told me SHE was dead.

Dead—whilst for that frail woman there,

Her foe, she watched and prayed,
From fevered lips the venom crept,
And through her being silent,
Her fair face glowed ; her heart beat loud

Her prayer low murmuring made,
And her sweet being heavenward sped,

As incense high upborne
With breathings of a choral hymn,
Sails upwards through the arches dim,
Sails upwards towards the seraphim,
By jasper gates of morn.

SYMPATHIES.

A CITY ASPIRATION.

OH ! not in a town to die,
With the restless trampling to and fro,
And the traffic hubbub above, below,
And the whirling wheels that hurry by,
And the chimney forests blacken'd and high,
Oh ! mercy, not in a town to die !

In a town I may live, and strive, and toil,
Till I grow a part of the living turmoil,
A cog-wheel in a machine of men,
Turning to labour again and again ;
Doing my work in the multitude,
With a spirit weaned and a heart subdued,
Pausing sometimes, in a moment of ease,
To yearn and sigh for a meadow breeze,
For the whispering rustle of summer trees,
And the dreamy murmur of golden bees,

For the field path margin'd by many a flower,
And the village church with its grey old tower
Yet still, for sake of my babes and thee,
Sweet wife, I may work courageously,
May bide in the town, and with iron will
Go labouring on in the hubbub still,
Where the wheels of the man-machine ever s
Money, and money, and money, to win.

But to *die* in a town, in turmoil and smoke,
Amongst houses and chimneys gaunt and hig
When the silken cord of the soul is broke,
Methinks the vapours so heavy would lie,
That it scarce could soar, as it should, to the
Oh! live as I may, to brook it I'll try,
But, mercy, not in a town to die!

IN-DOOR RELIEF :

(WHAT THE PAUPER SAID TO THE OVERSEER).

WHEN the summer sun is hot and high,
Under the rustling elms I lie,
Or by river margins among the sedge,
Or beneath the shade of a hazel hedge ;
I make my meal of an honest crust,
And look for the next in hope and trust,
And sleep with the starry sky overhead,
But I will not lie within pauper walls,
Nor feed upon pauper bread.

My fathers I know were yeomen good,
In the days when deer were shot in the wood,
And England's heart was merry as yet,
And the Maypole in the green was set ;
They worked their fill, and worked with a will,
They ploughed the valley and reaped the hill,
They housed the kine in the wooden shed,
But they never lived within pauper walls,
Nor fed upon pauper bread.

My fathers were honest, and stout, and true,
And cared not a jot so work was to do ;
They lived and loved, had babes by their wives,
And in shadow and sunshine passed their lives ;
And when God above sent care and ill,
They silently bowed to His blessed will ;
If hunger was theirs they bowed the head :
But they lived not ever in pauper walls,
Nor fed upon pauper bread.

Though poverty came, like a gaoler grim,
And twisted his chains round heart and limb,
And my race grew poor, and sick, and wan,
They still were English, woman and man,
And English pride in their hearts was alive,
And English courage could still survive,
Though worn and weary, and sore bested,
They scorned to lie within pauper walls,
Or live upon pauper bread.

And shall I belie you, kith and kin,
And do what ye would have counted a sin ?
So long as the earth has grass for me,
Or the shadowing branch of a single tree,

I'll earn, whilst I can, an honest crust,
Then lay me down and give "dust to dust,"
With the gentle earth beneath me—dead ;
But I will not live within pauper walls,
Nor die in a pauper bed !

I'll take your aid with a thankful heart,
If 'tis given from pauper walls apart,
And I'll work for you where the sky and the trees
With me and my race hold sympathies :
Nay, be it in city or country, still
Whilst work I can I'll work with a will,
And I'll eat your crust when my strength has fled,
But I will not live within pauper walls,
Nor die in a pauper bed !

Oh ! hear the cry of the honest heart,
Ye, living in happy homes, apart
From pauper pallets or pauper fare ;
Hear it, ladies, who know not care,
Hear it, lord, and cit, and clown,
By trade-winds wafted to money'd renown ;
And say if an Englishman born and bred
Shall be doomed to live within pauper walls,
Or die in a pauper bed !

THE FACTORY GIRL'S YEARNING.

Out of the factory window,
Out of the toil-haunted place,
Leaneth a girl's wasted figure,
Peereth a girl's weary face.

Over the red waste of houses,
Over the close steaming ways,
On the green country out yonder,
Fixed is a work-clouded gaze.

Far from the din of the hammers,
Far from the hot air behind—
Far, where the glad trees are swaying,
Wanders a work-wearied mind.

There, on the brooklet sun-golden,
Children are guiding the boat ;
There, in the shade of the willows,
Schoolmates are watching the float :

There, on the freshly-cut harvest,
Reapers are resting their steel ;
Forth come the mothers and maidens,
Bearing the love-seasoned meal :

There, in the path o'er the meadows,
Strong hands are claspèd in fair,
Fond hearts are telling their hist'ries,
Would that the gazer were there !—

* * * *

Still on the fair distance gazing,
Till she had dreamt her away,
With the young lovers in loving,
With the young children in play.

With the glad band of the reapers,
Sharing the rude country fare,
Pent in no envious brickwork
From a good God's gift of air.

Nay, even she envied the buried,
In their green homes that she saw,
Soft were *their* rich loamy pillows,
Hard was *her* pillow of straw !

* * * *

Still on that fair distance gazing,
Yearnings and mem'ries arise,
Fond hopes, by toil drugg'd to slumber,
Flooding her heart and her eyes.

* * * *

Black, like the plume of a hero,
Smoke from the factory leapt—
Met the fresh gust from the meadows,
Round the tall chimneys it crept.

And the green landscape was hidden,
Like a fair face with a mask ;
From her bright dreams woke the worker,
Sighing she turned to her task !

HAVELOCK.

Some men there are whose natures seem to be
 Too sternly good for beauty, and whose souls
 Rebuke the flowering prettiness beneath :
 Hast thou seen a solemn towering crag,
 Whose head is set among the pillowing clouds,
 And round whose feet are many-blossoming flowers,
 And all that rock is grand—not beautiful.
 Yet, as thou lookest, from out a sheath of cloud
 Flashes at once a sunny sword-like ray
 That smites the crag's grey summit into light,
 And crowns it with a beauty all its own.
 So Havelock seems, a grand and simple soul—
 Grand in heroic crag-like strength, yet crown'd
 With truest beauty of the Christian life.


THE ROPE DANCER.

OVER the gaping arena,
The sea of upturn'd eager faces,
Bounding along on the tight-rope,
Ripe in all womanly graces ;
Fearless, exultant, triumphant,
Full in death's eager eyes staring,
Staring with scorn and defiance,
With more than a man's joyous daring ;
So she seems—who may tell us
How sorely that woman's heart flutters,
Who tell her home-thoughts and the prayers
That fervently, quickly, she utters ?
Bread-winner she, and her guerdon
Perchance her sick sisters' or mother's embraces ;
Love wings her footsteps, love her nerves steadies,
They must live—so her peril she faces.

Hark to the deafening plaudits,
The frail building shakes with the thunder,
But surely the heart of the dancer
Beats faster than those that beat under.
“Fortune, by fame ;” for her dear ones
She thinks, and her courage flames higher.
She bounds on the rope like a fairy—
A fairy enveloped in fire :
Ah ! a firework flashes too soon—see,
She totters—she struggles—Great Heaven !
She falls !—with a scream of excitement
The gaping arena is riven.
Raise her—oh ! poor crumpled butterfly,
Dead ? No, but shattered for ever ;
Never again the encore and the plaudits,
Never the triumph—ah never !—
No more for her dear ones the pleasures
Won by her courage and toiling,
Hardship, and grim folds of poverty,
Around them henceforward encoiling.

REASON AND FAITH.

I SOUGHT to pierce the veil of mystery,
And see those hidden things that lie
In secret chambers of the heavens high.
So forthwith Reason's ladder, strong and
I planted where it firmly stood ;
And quick ascending high, and higher,
I reached the top. Ah, vain desire !
Weak striving : at the topmost round
All boundless still the heavens I found,
My ladder could no further serve, and I,
Shaken at heart, with sad, despairing cry
Made ready to descend, when lo !
An eagle came, down swooping from on high
The eagle *Faith*, so masterful of wing.
She neared ; I clutched with eager hand
Grappled her to me as with iron bands,
Holding her wings I straight was borne :
To those pure heights whence cometh life



MISCELLANEOUS.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions of the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

ALICE MOORE : A CHRISTMAS STORY.

Poor Alice, who was once fair Alice ; child
To one who was a farmer in a northern home,
A sweet sequestered village, closely shut
In the embracing arms of gentle hills,
On which, in summer days, bright heather waved,
And summer blooms made fragrant all the air,
Had long been absent from its love and life.
And Alice, journeying to that dear home,
Went slowly on her way with blistered feet.
Her hair as golden as a sunrise, hung
Tangled about her neck ; her violet eyes
Were sadly dimmed by salt heart-broken tears,
Her scanty garments fluttered in the wind,
Soiled, as her life itself was soiled, alas !
And tattered as her robe of innocence.
The days were cold bright winter days, with keen
Frost-bearing winds, which lifted up her rags
And laid their icy fingers on her heart.

Still on her weary way, with stedfast mind,
She held her course, though to lie down and slide,
As from one stage into another of a dream,
From Sleep's caresses into those of Death,
Had well contented her.

Three days before

She fled from London's lights, where horror dwelt,
Where gaunt-eyed Famine wore a painted cheek,
And flaunting devilries stained the wholesome day,
Hating, how much, her fellows and herself!
She rose, when once again her better angel called,
Fled, northward—with an onward-urging heart,
Toward the pure haven of her olden home.

* * * * *

She reached the village on a Christmas morn,
Fields sparkled white, hedges were swathed in snow,
Snow-laden boughs of giant oaks and elms
Made solemn aisles of all the narrow lanes,
With glittering fret-work, and with arches white,
Yet here and there a red leaf trembling hung
Like banners of dead autumn flying still,
Though lost the conflict with her ancient foe.
The ricks in farmers' yards white caftans wore,
And in the churchyards, like to shrouded ghosts,

Primeval yews stood muffled in the snow.
Then Alice stopped before the churchyard wall,
That low grey Norman church she knew so well,
And from the windows came, in solemn gusts,
The organ's pealing and a holy hymn.
Till Memory, the chronicler so dear,
Who sits at Time's feet pen in hand, and then
Comes gliding near us in a quiet hour,
And wets our eyes with thoughts of long-dried tears,
And lights our cheeks with children of old smiles,
To Alice brought her young life back again.
Herself she saw, a child with linsey cloak enwrapt,
Her half-shaped ringlets falling o'er the hood ;
Between her parents, holding each a hand,
Walking to church, on such a morn as this,
Safe in their love and her own innocence.
And then her happy maiden-time she saw,
When long bright summer days, too short for joy,
Like notes of happy music glided on,
Till, stealing in the holy name of love,
Wrapt in his vestment, borrowing his smile,
The sweet curse of her life had crossed her way.
Came back the blissful time, the glamour-dream,
The sin committed and her tempter false—and then

Her father's love all shattered, and his curse,
Her mother's tears and low heart-broken sobs,
And last, the horror of her life since then.
And as she pondered o'er these things, the bells
From their chill dwelling in the old grey tower
Rang merrily, and church doors open thrown
Poured quickly forth the village life once more.
She crept away, yet hid herself where all
Would pass before her sight, yet see her not.
She scanned them all, the buxom widow she
Had left a wife ; the tiny girl she knew,
A happy wife with baby in her arms,
And ruddy rustic husband by her side ;
Old women, all unchanged to sight ; old men
She knew as old, living, scarce altered, still.
Lint-headed flocks of children never known,
Girls fair as she had been, and men as strong,
And merry-eyed as he who crushed her life.
She saw the squire, she left him but a lad,
Chatting amidst a knot of lady-friends,
And two three splendid-whiskered gentlemen
His guests to be ; and, ah, her wild heart leaps,
Her father's white head leaves the porch alone—
Alone ! her mother—is she ill, or dead ?

h, has she come to find but half a home ?
 or "dead " she feels it is ; down their old ways
 the salt tears run—she dashes them away,
 and follows with her gaze her father's feet.
 Now thin, how wan his face, how grey his hair !
 she recognised her work—how bent his back !
 At age, she felt, had bowed him thus ; her crime,
 her handywork ; this strong man, ere his day
 sunk to the merest shadow of himself.
 She saw him turn aside with faltering steps,
 and pass between the graves towards where she stood.
 Before a stone he halted, bending down
 with withered hands upon his staff he leant,
 a heavy sob from out his inner heart
 shook all his frame ; he turned his head, the tears
 were in his eyes ; then, surely, Alice knew
 her mother's quiet grave was there.

She yearned—

might she fling herself there, then,
 on the turf, and catch her father's knee
 in her embrace, and whisper to the stone
 her remorse, all, all her love ; but no,
 the time was lost, her father rose and went,
 went homewards, to his lonely Christmas hearth ;

Never till then had sorrow settled down—
Remorse and sorrow—with so dread a weight
On her crushed heart. She waited patiently
Until the living tide had ebbed away
Under the churchyard lich-gate, then she clomb
The little wall, and, standing face to face
With the cold stone, she read her mother's name.
Read every letter through fast crowding tears ;
Her age, the carven verse that told what she
Knew better than the chisel point could tell,
Her worth, her Christian life, her hope of joy,
Beyond the cold world's gates.

Then Alice knelt
And kissed the letters and the snowy sod,
And rising, started for her olden home.
The Christmas fires painted the casements red,
The laughter swept in eddies from the doors,
When down the village street she passed, and saw
Many she knew, who knew her not ; 'twas well.
She reached the oaken cottage gate at last,
And through the garden passed, and at the door
Paused, with her cheek on fire, her heart
Shaking her bosom, and her snow-cold limbs
All trembling. She durst not raise the latch,

but stepped aside, and through the windows peeped ;
 Her father, with his hat cast on the floor,
 Was sitting in the blaze of a great fire ;
 His elbows on his knees, and holding close
 His face within his hands ; she knew he wept,
 and could not enter then—but stayed awhile ;
 Shortly she heard him groan—once—twice
 Groan forth one piteous word “ alone—alone.”
 He read his thoughts, alone this Christmas tide,
 Love buried, love that should survive, lost, lost,
 The true wife gone, the daughter worse than dead.
 Alone by a waste hearth—alone with age.
 Once more the bitter word escaped his lips—
 He could not bear it ; rushing to the door,
 He entered running, and herself flung down
 Beside him, with outstretched arms,
 And wild eyes, crying :—“ Not alone, oh no,
 For I am here, thy daughter, Alice, here ! ”
 He started up, and shrank away as one
 Suddenly shrinking from a viper near,
 And touched her with his foot, and drew him back
 Against the wall, his grey eyes flashing fire
 ; in the day she left—“ You here—you here ? ”
 Yes, father, here—your daughter Alice, once.”

"No daughter thou!" his wrathful answer came,
"My curse—thy mother's murderess—away!
Out in the snow and perish there—oh, shame!
No one of all my race like thee before—
Out, or I spurn thee like a dog!"

She shrank

Cowed towards the door, but piteously cried,
With out-stretched arms, and over-running eyes:—
"Forgive me! for we cannot kill the past;
And truly—truly I repent;" and then:—
"Forgive me, father, for I knelt to-day
On mother's grave, and knew had she been here
She had forgiven all—oh!" for his eyes
Still held their wrath, "forgive me now or kill—
Kill me, and I will give you love for that!"
In vain her cries: he answered, stern and cold:—
"Bring back your mother to yon empty chair,
And I forgive—but never until then."
Poor Alice gave a long, heart-broken shriek:—
"Oh father, this is killing me, indeed!
Yet once more—oh, forgive me, for I go,
I go—to see you never more—I hoped,
To mend the past, to undo, if I might,
Some little of the evil done—to live—

Live lovingly with you till death." "Away,"
 He cried :—" in honest homes we want no filth,
 No scum of the earth like you ; begone, begone !"
 He thrust her out, and roughly shut the door.

* * * * *

She fell upon her face, upon the snow ;
 Lay stunned in heart and brain awhile, and then
 Rose up to go for ever.

In the house

Meanwhile, came to the old man, as he stood
 Shaking with age, and livid with his wrath,
 A gentle gleam from long departed days,
 A smile from out a cradle long ago ;
 Came there before his sight a pleading face—
 His wife's—and in his ears a gentle voice
 Stole, saying :—" Husband, she is thine and mine—
 Forgive her sin, for we have sinned."

One step

Had Alice taken, when once more she heard
 Her father's voice, how changed—" Come back,"
 In hollow, broken tones, he said, " my girl—my
 dear."

He, turning, saw him stretching forth his hands
 Shaking and trembling, saw the tears steal down

His wasted cheeks, and, with a passionate cry
Fled to his arms, and laid her head at last
Under the shadow of his long grey hair,
“Forgiven?” asked she, timidly; and he
Murmured in sobs—“Oh yes, forgiven—yes,
My girl, my own, my daughter—all forgiven.”

And so the bitter wound of old was healed
For ever, and the breach herself had made
Between her former and her later self
Arched over with the bridge of love once mor

SHADOWS.

SHADOWS—shadows on the stream,
Gliding with a golden gleam
Smoothly as a summer dream,
Where the willows bending o'er
Link the islets to the shore.
Shadows—three young children playing,
Two of the same race—and one,
Whom I knew in years bygone.
Fond eyes with the speedwell's blue,
Soft brown hair, with just a hue
From the mellow harvest ears,
Cheeks that flushed with hopes and fears.

Shadows on the gliding water,
In those glowing hours when spring
Into summer's lap doth fling

All her flowery store—and dies.
Shadows—lovers loitering,
Plucking joys their hopes could bring
From a future, well, I ween,
Pictured—but all unforeseen.
Life and love yet mingled
As the sunshine and the stream.
Suddenly—and on that water,
Shadows three, and changing fast,
Quick short flashes hither, thither,
Sword thrusts speeding to and fro,
And the trampled grass and sedge
Bending to the river-edge ;
And the troubled moor-fowl flying
From the reedy islet lying
Half-way in the stream.
Then were shadows on the water
Two—two only—and below,
Creeping silently and slow,
Like a thing of evil winding,
Stole a thin and ruddy thread
Secretly through tufted grass,
Fouling all that let it pass,
Dropping in the silent river.

Many times the river-islets
Put their summer glories on ;
Many times the broad-leaved lilies
Wore their lustrous summer crowns ;
Many lovers' feet have shaken
Dew-drops from those meadow flowers ;
Many a dear life-memory gathered
Fruit of golden summer hours,
Where those river willows wave,
Since that day when in the sun
Love and hate their work begun.

There is dust within his grave,
His, who fighting fell that day ;
Round the head-stone in the sun
Now the little children play.
Grey hairs cannot blot remorse
From his living brother's heart :
Though he strive, and fast, and pray,
With its bloody hands the past
Stalks before his sight away.

Time is flying—life is waning,
She I knew, how changed—yet comes

Often to that river shore,
Where love whispers never more,
When the summer day is dying :
And ye see her shadow lying
Darkening the rippling stream
Like the shadow of a dream.

AN ILLICIT LOVE.

A LIGHT upon a lone waste sea
Coming, men know not whence,
Falling, men know not where,
Reddening the waves with sudden glare ;
Weird-like, fantastical,
Yet somehow strangely fair ;
No light of starry beams, nor sun,
Nor from the Aurora's arch
Soft intermitted rays,
Likest the wild amaze
When amid shrieks and cries,
A pine-ship bursts in blaze ;
And over canopies the smoke,
The red-fire heart within
Which ever heaves and pants,
Like heaving breasts of sin.

Like this thy love, alas ! my friend,
Suckled and reared in lust ;
Flaming so hot, so bright,
Obscuring heaven with sudden light.
The lurid light will fail, my friend,
'Twill flash, then flicker to its end,
And sink in pitchy night.

ROSARY BEADS.

In the saintly gloom of cloisters—
 Wasted hands tell rosary beads,
So my heart in lonely vigils,
 When my memory backward leads—

To the morning's open casement,
 Ere the growing day brought strife—
Inward, outward—strife and anguish,
 Tells the bead-roll of my life.

Many a day with sunny laughter,
 Lightly, lightly, gliding by ;
Many a day dropped slowly, sadly,
 With a heart-indwelling sigh.

Twain there are that shine and glisten
In that rosary's hopes and fears,
But the one with joy is radiant,
And the other bright with tears.

By the feathery willows, waving
In the first soft amber light
Of an early summer morning,
As they strips of vanquished night,

Clinging, shadow-like, on raiments
Of the fresh uprising morn,
And the weary stars were failing,
Blinking, paling in the dawn.

By a silver-chiming brooklet,
Running darkly now, and then
Laughing round its many pebbles
As the light stole up the glen.

As I think of that fair morning,
Set behind the clouds of years,
Pictures rise, that once were living,
Dimly visioned through my tears.

Glorious floating, golden tresses,
 Round an unforgotten face ;
 Holy eyes that faintly shadowed
 Forth the inner light and grace.

Mine that morning all I yearned for ;
 Mine that morning heart and hand ;
 Mine, radiant eyes ; mine, maiden fancies ;
 Chastened thoughts, to understand.

All the wheels of time thenceforward
 Hung with roses were to be,
 Rolling softly—gliding rather,
 To a rapturous melody.

So we stayed till dew-drops glistened
 On the willows where they lay,
 Phosphor quenched in light, and meadows
 Reddening in the growing day.

But that other day's remembrance
 Ghost-like stalks before my mind,
 And a shudder creeps about me,
 From an ice-floe comes the wind ;

Evening—and a rainy wold—and vapours
Driving o'er the solemn mere,
Ghostly murmurs in the branches
Of the pine wood dense and drear.

And the lonely curlews wailing,
And the white and wasted moon ;
Earth around me dark, with shadows
Of that night that comes too soon.

All the clocks with cruel hurry,
Beating out Time's rapid race,
As I sat all silent gazing
On the one beloved face.

With a fixed and frozen anguish,
Far beyond the fount of tears,
This—I cried—my life's fruition ?
• *This*—the climax of my years ?

Stole a wandering moonbeam silvery,
Then upon its silent way ;
Up and up, from earth to heaven,
Sailed the light of life away.

Darkness, and a heavy gust, and torrents
 Shaken from the leaden skies ;
 And the rounded world became
 A loveless void before my eyes.

Still by her I knelt despairing,
 Through the gusty night forlorn ;
 Till divinest hands came reaching,
 Raised me, and new trust was born.

BELLS IN THE NIGHT.

STAND in the midnight, when
Dieth the year again ;
Hark ! over field and fen,
Rolling through glade and glen,
Voices thou hearest then
Faintly, then clear again,
 'Tis the bells—'tis the bells.
Voices in every tone
Float on the breezes lone,
Voices of ages flown
Leap from the turret-stone,
 With the bells—with the bells.

Ah ! those restless shades of the olden, olden time,
Shrouded right solemnly in their sober suits of *rime*,

Ghosts of unremembered years
 Sing their stories in our ears,
 Shrilly tones of feeble seers
 Call the old year to his peers,
 With the bells—with the bells.
 Now they die, now they die ;
 And a quivering echo dwells
 On the breezes lying low,
 That the weary year may go,
 Stay the bells—stay the bells.

* * * *

Swelling up merrily,
 Welling up lovingly,
 Gushing up cheerily,
 From where the breezes lie,
 Fountains of melody,
 Bring the bells—bring the bells.
 Welcome—true welcoming
 Be to thee, BABY-KING.
 Harmony's fullest string,
 Song-service gladdening,
 Bring the bells—bring the bells.

Ah ! the baby year, he is smiling in his bed,
Rays of sunny hours to come glisten round his head

See, that glory brighter glows,
And the cradle-couch of snows,
With foreshadowed joyance glows,
And a mellow flood there flows,
From the bells—from the bells.

Now they ring, now they ring,
And the music eddying swells,
With its woven webs of tone,
Round the tender yearling's throne,
'Tis the bells—'tis the bells.

THE TRUE NECROMANCY.

Oh ! solemn army of the dead,
Before me marching night by night,
With forms but hinting of a form,
With faces shadowy white.

What are ye—wherefore do ye come ?
And whence have swift feet borne
Ye, whose dead germs we sowed in earth,
To wait till harvest morn ?

What all the wealth that cumber earth,
Ivory, and gems, and gold,
To one dear word from your pale lips,
One message from the mould ?

Like infants cast on desert shores,
We blindly grope and fall;
Knowing so much we nothing know,
Say, do ye know it all?

What is the mystery of these stars
That vex us with their shine?
What of this upheld disc of earth,
And what is natural, what divine?

How keep the seasons in their course,
How opes the leaf and springs the seed?
And whence is all the force of brain,
That makes "red earth" a "man" indeed?

Fate—whence is it, what boundeth will?
What smacks of weakness, what of power?
Athletes and demi-gods are we,
Or filmy flutterers of an hour?

Whence language, and the springs of love,
That pulsate through all human time,
And string the common chords of earth
To harmony sublime?

Oh! ye, whose hands are claspt in ours,
Oh! ye whose cheeks were wet with tears,
Or curved in smiles, at grief or joy,
Our joys and griefs in other years.

Oh! tell us, tell us, if ye may,
What are ye, what, and where,
What bliss, what rest hath guerdoned ye,
What have we yet to bear?

No answer; with their holy eyes
A mild reproof they cast;
They seem to say, "In patience wait,
Not long your doubts may last;

"Faith is life's crown," they say to us,
"We may not tell, all is not dust;
We would we might some token give,
We trusted—do ye trust."

SUN AND SHADE.

THE hills in vapours vested, winds around us whirling,
The smoke about the house-tops eddying and skirling,
The columned mists, like pallid wraiths, o'er the
lakelet driving,
Oh, wherefore all the cark, the weariness of living !
About us tempest-voices, loud in ululations,
Within us rage unceasing devil-born temptations.

The storm flies forth to ocean, where the petrel
wheeleteth,
Where surges toss their plumes, and the riven vessel
reeleth ;
And see, a port-hole in the clouds, the blue revealing,
A sun-beam, like a maiden, coyly forth is stealing ;
The mellow merle is jubilant, 'mid the leaves so glistening,
And all is bright without, within, we stand in rapture
listening.

THE EARLY ENGLISH NAVIGATORS.

THE pole-star glittered on the ice,
Strong icy bastions towered around
Each northern sea, and creek, and sound,
And silence, muffled up in snow,
Sat on the desert white,
Where crimson spikes of northern fires
Lay, like a coronet, on the brow
Of the lone Polar night.

But English voices cleft the silent air,
Stout English hearts with courage wrought;
Though frozen sail, and spar, and shroud,
The *western sea-way* still they sought.

All patient, buffeted with storm on storm,
They sailed, those men of iron will ;
Then passed, but left a glory trail,
That lies across the ages still.

They sailed, those men of hero-mould,
They stoutly struggled and endured ;
They wrought from frozen cape to cape,
By England's honour lured.

Confessing, strong though ice and rock,
Strong northern winds and surging foam,
Their MASTER stronger yet than all.
Confessing trusted, laboured well,
And conquering turned their prow towards home

Oh, joy ! the land they loved is ours ;
Oh, joy ! their tongue and ours the same ;
English their steadfastness and truth,
England the cradle of their fame.

Oh ! bind their memories on our hearts,
Oh ! live, oh ! die, true men as they ;
Serene howe'er is cast our life,
Constant and strong, and true alway.


Oh ! learn their faith, their hope, their trust.
Stout hearts built up by prayer
Though all life's tempests round them rage,
Still strongly do and dare.

Come wave, come iceberg, wind, and storm,
Come driving mist and choking sand,
We gird your lesson round our hearts,
Men of strong soul and hand !

A CHARACTER.

A RUDE rough man—

A piece of human granite scarred by storms,
And buffeted by cruel waves of life.
Upon his brow lay, shading darkling eyes,
His white hair in great masses, like the flakes
Of foam that hang upon the rocks, and lie
Trembling upon the sand, when sea and wind
Rage, like twin-devils, round our island coasts,
And sailors toss like idle waifs and strays,
And giant ships, like playthings, on the shore.
Power in the squarely moulded head and brow,
And in the wrinkles of the rough-hewn face,
Power with an iron stylus written down;
Resolve and daring in the mouth and eyes,
Eyes wherewithal to look death in the face



Unflinching, and in gazing proudly fall
Whelmed in the waves, or in the reek of war.
And yet about the corners of that mouth,
And coyly peeping from those lustrous eyes,
Love lurked and smiled, and, as you looked at him,
A something indefinable, yet felt at once,
Told of warm heart and high soul underneath.
So, passing from a rocky guarded coast, do we
Come often on a pleasant valley land,
Rich in its yellow grain, in golden apples rich,
Serene in pastoral peace and beauty rare.

LONG AGO.

On the grey drifting clouds
Red strips of dawning,
Fresh winds from eastward
Bringing the morning.

Night tears in dew-drops
On the sprays lying;
Night's shadows westward
Hastily flying!

Dark tresses round thee
Floating in splendour;
Eyes to whose radiance
Homage all render.

White arms and shoulders,
Statue-white gleaming ;
Loose vesture round thee,
Beauty beseeming.

Sweet maiden blushes,
Stolen the meeting,
Trembling soft maiden kiss,
This my fond greeting.

Oh, the joy—wondrous !
Tinted with sorrow,
For the sad severance
Hid in the morrow.

Kisses the fondest—
Passionate trembling ;
Love spoken fully,
Then no dissembling.

Years fold their mantles
Round those dead blisses,
Many hearts beat, giving
Maidenly kisses.

Dawnings are breaking,
Morning dew's glistening;
Love, to love's utterance
Oftentimes listening.

Soft breezes fail not,
Sunlight fails never;
Love and love's fancies lie
Buried for ever.

A HOME.

UNGAINLY dwelling-house, and meanly small,
 With four straight walls, and standing in a street ;
 A coarse clay cabinet for treasured love
 Which thou dost hold ; for never house of man,
 Compact of marble, glistening with gold,
 And ceiled with ivory, wherein Roman pride
 And Roman beauty found congenial home ;
 Or palace sparkling white by murmuring tides
 Of purple Bosphorus, or proudly set
 Where mellow sunlights kiss th' Ægean isles ;
 Or, in its columned splendour looking down
 On gliding gondolas and still lagoons,
 Has fascination like to thine—

The charm

Without whose breath mere beauty is but form,
 Grace valueless, and life an empty void,
 The charm of love is on those humble walls—
 And like a nimbus round some lowly saint,

Reflects on earthly care the rays of heaven.
There youth and memory hand in hand, and clad
In vestal raiment of the purest white,
Enter and sit—and the poor place at once
Bursts suddenly in bloom, as if a saint,
In wonder-working days, had passed along
A poor frost-withered garden, and its sticks—
Not budding first—had blossomed all at once
In golden crowns and scarlet petals fair.
'Twas there, oh humble love-illuminated home,
We lived and loved, and tenderly took hands
Of those who loved us well—there kisses took
From lips now cold in death—there last we hear
A mother's and a sister's gentle words ;
There bade farewell—not knowing it the last.
So, house, we love thee, as we could not love
A palace wherein no pulse of love had struck,
Where farewells had not been—and where
No busy memories haunt the vacant rooms.

"THE LONDON."

THE noble ship—an idle waif
Tossed, battered, lifted, driven,
The whirling mist of broken spray,
The black and angry heaven.
And in the midst, supremely calm,
A band of English hearts,
With prayer and litanies awaits,
Till death the vessel parts.

Rest to their souls who found, midst storm,
From storm a glad surcease;
Who reached their hands from out the strife
And touched eternal peace.
Oh! hero-captain, leal of heart,
To weep would do you wrong,
Methinks your life and fate appear
A strain of English song.

A voice from old heroic days,
When life was counted dust,
Weighed in the scale with nobler things,
Honour, and faith, and trust.
Still hope for England must there be,
And life in England yet,
Her warm heart leaps to hear thy name,
And cannot soon forget.

UMBRA MORTIS.

RIGHT before us as we walk,
 Changing never.
Unillumed by any sun,
Falls a shadow vast and dun,
As the shadow of a tower
Falling at the setting hour,
In the crimson Syrian land,
Like a bar across the sand.
And we walk—with wavering eye,
Ever towards the mystery ;
Sometimes half rebelliously,
Weak as rebel infancy,
Clenching fists as soft as silk,
Angry with its mother's milk ;
Oftentimes with shuddering fear,
As our steps the shadow near ;
And at times—and noblest then—

With stout hearts, though throbbing fast,
March towards where the shade is cast.
We cry—"That shadow spoileth all!"
Whatever sun rays on us fall,
What leaves soe'er may glisten round,
How green soe'er the summer ground,
That evil shadow spoileth all.
For nought within that shadow blooms,
Save cypress, sentinel for tombs,
And rankest weeds and fungi foul;
Yews—cloisters for the screeching owl—
There falls about us, as we feast,
The shadow of that shade—at least
Across our bubbling wine it lies,
It slurs the light in beauty's eyes;
Aslant o'er beating bosoms white,
When nuptial feasting swims in light;
Stealing adown the pictured wall:
That evil shadow spoileth all.

Sure, sure, we err, wrongly we deem
No *ill* may reign with *good* supreme;
The good is true, the ill a dream.
The tower from whence the shadow falls,

The shadow from its pitchy walls
The prescience-shade that sullies joy,
Good all, gold all, without alloy !
'Tis false to say no flowerets bloom
Within that shadow's heart of gloom ;
For one, a lily pure and pale,
Blooms when all garish roses fail.
A lily ! saints in frescoes old
Stand, having such within their hold,
On, on ! and pluck that lily pure,
Unmoved the shadow we endure,
Enter the pitchy tower, then see,
Ah, mystery of mystery !
The shadow dies, the very tower,
Breaks into blossoms like a bower ;
Is smitten 'midst a trumpet's blare,
Whilst angel voices mount around,
Rising like growing banks of sound ;
Smitten with sunbeams bright and vast,
Yields, crumbles in the sunny air,
Melts, mingles with the sun at last !

A WHITE HYACINTH.

HYACINTH, that lights our room
With grace past our deserving,
Whilst thou livest at least we see
Somewhat worth conserving.

Bending stalk with cumulation
Of flowerlets, white as angels' wings ;
Whence each tiny cup—a censer,
Daintiest incense-odour flings.

Art thou Hyacinthus fair,
Who lives in fable olden,
E're that fatal falling quoit
Cleft his tresses golden?

Or, amid the tender green
Embracing leaves about thee,
Beauteous blooming Hymadryad,
Whitest wood nymph—who could doubt th

Better far thou art, a piece
Of God's own heaven-born beauty,
Smiling in this wintry time.
Doubtless 'tis thy duty—

Us to teach that love and grace
In darkest days may blossom,
And that a tender bloom of hope
May shine in sorrow's bosom.

Beauty lives and never dies,
Thou to us art telling;
And, where beauty lives, there is
Heavenly love indwelling.

“What, if wintry time,” thou sayest,
“And earth, hold such graces
Must the blooms, the odours be
Of the heavenly places?”

This—for this have I thy flowers,
With blessings softly kissed,
As I would a human flower;
Hyacinth Evangelist!


PILATE.

SHALL even Pilate lose his crown?
What! do my words incur your frown?
You, clad in surplice, vestment, gown,
You, standing girt with your peculiar air,
And saintly odours, damning here and there;
Prejudging more, be sure, than angels dare.
Dealing to this one fiery coals—this—rest!
To this red tortures, this a mansion blest,
Look not with horror yet, nor mutter “Down.”
Attesting fancied judgments with earth’s frown;
I ask again—shall Pilate lose his crown?

For, musing on that dreadful trial scene,
The hideous mockery of that trial day,
I think—I dare not otherwise, be sure,
All may not end, as earth’s prejudgings say;

For I remember One, the Master, said
That who the cup of water only gave,
Should lose not his reward—then, then,
Shall there be none for him who strove to save?
“Who strove to save!—poor weakling he,”
You say. Ah well, at least we find the will,
And will is somewhat, though we fail in act;
Pilate would save when all around would kill;
How quick your voices answer—“damned.”
I ask, in common ruin must they lie?
He who proclaimed “I find no fault,” and they,
Blood-craving ones, who shouted “Crucify!”
That Pilate weakly strove and failed is nought;
Look closely on our own weak lives, and say,
With little easy tasks, scant peril that we have,
Do we, my friends, our strongest, best, always?
I feel that great grave Tuscan may be right
Who told of rings gradating, bliss and bale,
Of divers grades, degrees of doom or light,
For justice else, it seems to me, would fail.

“Judge not, and be not judged;” and yet
With souls we play as pictured cards,
And deal this, these, to points of rest



While this or that our hand retards.
So, clad in surplice, vestment, gown,
Roman, Genevan, Anglican, and black,
White, coloured, crossed on front or back,
You, lofty meek ones looking with your frown—
I ask, “ Shall even Pilate lose his crown ? ”

ADVENT.

SURE if Thou cam'st into the press
Of those full streets we walk each day,
Or, with a sudden glory stept
Where we are met to praise and pray.

Thou, not a form by faith's eyes drawn,
Thou, not a lesson learnt from youth,
Thou, not a hope where doubts will cross,
Thou, in the presence—with the truth !

Oh, if Thou cam'st, with dazzling rays,
Shot from about Thy forehead fair,
The rays from Heaven's porphyry walls,
The light from Heaven's luminous air.

Cam'st with those eyes we seem to know,
So holy-human in their shine ;
Where highest earthly sympathy
Is all sublimed to the Divine.

If, whilst our anthems pealed weak praise,
A sudden rushing wind swept through ;
If, whilst our choral voices rang
A single silver clarion blew.

And anthem notes in deeper awe
Were hushed, and lamps in fuller light
Were dimmed, and worship of the lips
Merged in that worship of the sight.

Would we not leave our dearest hopes,
Shake fettering ties at once aside ;
Thou present to receive our prayers,
Present in sight—our very Guide.

Ah, if Thou cam'st, should we not run,
And cast ourselves before Thee there ;
Bow humblest heads in lowly dust,
Raise hands whose feebleness is prayer.

“ Oh Lord, oh Lord,” should we not cry
With throbbing hearts, down-looking eyes,
“ Our dream, our faith, our shudd'ring doubt,
Thou, Verity of Verities !”

Alas, we know, if sight were ours,
We would not fail in awe, in love,
So, weakling hearts, in dream we cry
Lord ! only grant us leave to prove !

Have mercy, those of old, who walked
With Thee on that blest Canaan shore,
Were granted sight—'twas easy then,
We think, to love and to adore.

'Tis hard, we cry, with wrangling sects,
Hard with the clash of jangling creeds,
Hard, with the looks askance at each,
Deeds mocking faith, faith shaming deeds.

Hard to lift eyes of longing faith
And see Thee when they bid us see ;
Our preachers, priests, with hearts as ours,
Have they a clearer sight than we ?

If hard it be, oh help the more,
Lean down from awful sapphire heights ;
Aid us unseen with heavenly arms,
In doubtful days, in troublous nights.

We strongly yearn—how may we know
Our beating brains for faith will strive ;
Our hearts long for the fullest love,
Pent in this humming human hive.

Condemn us not—so much to learn,
So much to know and feel :
The world's white arms, with jewels hung,
Are clinging—when we ought to kneel.

Oh, help us—never help but Thee,
Help in our doubt—our half-despair ;
No outer sight have we—then give
That inner sight so greatly rare.

We grow impatient with our time,
We, sore perplexed, can only pray ;
They walked with light about their feet,
Those saints of old, half vexed we say.

Forgive, forgive, we scarce know what
We utter, Lord, then grant us light ;
Would Thou wert here—but give us faith,
'Tis better, holier, than sight.









